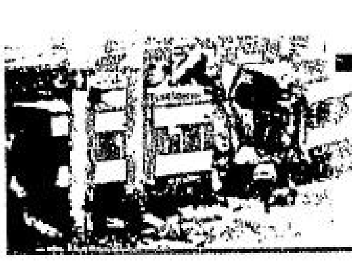

■ World / A10
186 killed in 4 train blasts in Madrid

■ News / A2
Seafarers absentee voting today

Tanong ng Bayan / A24
Dapat bang pagdudahan ang Comelec?
NGAYONG ALAS-10 NG GABI

■ Business / B8
RP power rates among world's highest

■Lifestyle / F1
6 things to remember when shopping for swimwear

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Opposition row worsens

SINUNGALING!

By Norman Bordadora, TJ Burgonio and Carlito Pablo

DUMAGUETE CITY—Stepping up his word war with the handlers of Fernando Poe Jr., presidential candi date Panfilo Lacson said yesterday that "they must be cowering in their seats."

OPPOSITION / A21

Muslim religious leaders support family planning

By Dennis Jay C. Santos and Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Muslim religious leaders have joined the campaign to curb the country's runaway population growth by issuing a fatwah (edict) that would allow Muslim couples

MUSLIM/ A21

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Friday, March 12, 2004 ★★★ 80 pages / 10 sections / vol. 19 / no. 95 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Ship captain tells probers he smelled gunpowder

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE CAPTAIN of SuperFerry 14 told investigators yesterday that he smelled gunpowder after a powerful explosion rocked the ship on Feb. 27, bolstering the claim of the terrorist group Abu Sayyaf that it put a suicide bomber on board.

At the first hearing of the Board of Marine Inquiry, Ceferino Manzo said the entire tourist section was engulfed in "thick black smoke (that) smelled like gunpowder."

Erden Ferrer, safety supervisor of the ship's owner, Aboitiz Transport Systems Corp., testified that about 150 survivors told him the explosion took place in the tourist section on the A-deck, in the general area of bunk 51—the same place where the Abu Sayyaf claimed its attacker detonated a bomb.

Khadaffy Janjalani, head of the Abu Sayyaf, identified on March 1 the suicide bomber as Arnulfo Alvarado, a native of Pata Island in Sulu whose real name was Abu Muadz. Janjanlani said Muadz, 33, was Passenger 51 and stayed at the tourist cabin.

Manzo said he was familiar with the smell of gunpowder because he was a gun club member. The captain, who lived at a military camp in Cagayan de Oro, said the explosion was as loud as a cannon. "The explosion shook the vessel," he said. "I felt my vessel was aground."

The Board of Marine Inquiry is trying to determine what caused the explosion, which sparked a fire that gutted SuperFerry 14 in Manila Bay. Most of the 899 people aboard survived, but 27 bodies have been recovered and 92 people are still missing, the Philippine Coast Guard said.

Officials have played down the Abu

SHIP/ A9

CEFERINO MANZO, captain of the SuperFerry 14, testifies that the explosion was as loud as a cannon.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

INC backs GMA on Erap

Prosecutors urge transfer of Estrada to Veterans Memorial

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE RELIGIOUS groups Iglesia ni Cristo and El Shaddai yesterday weighed in on the side of Joseph Estrada, denouncing members of civil society who had been questioning his unauthorized visits to his vacation house in Tanay, Rizal.

The two politically influential groups, which count millions of members between them, issued a joint statement calling for "charity and compassion" for the ousted leader who had admitted spending time in his 15-hectare estate just across from the military camp where the Sandiganbayan had transferred him.

It was Mike Defensor, President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign spokesperson and personal emissary to Estrada, who broke the news to reporters covering Ms Macapagal's sortie in Calamba, Laguna.

He said he was surprised that the two groups had issued a statement, copies of which he later distributed to reporters. *(See box on Page A22.)*

"We are wondering why certain sectors are making a big issue out of former President Joseph Estrada's occasional visits to his vacation house in Tanay, Rizal. He is not trying to escape from the law when he does that, as the said house is just across from Camp Capinpin where he is supposed to be detained," said the statement distributed by Defensor and signed by Bienvenido Santiago and Mel Robles, spokespersons for the INC and El Shaddai, respectively.

Defensor, who is on leave from his post as housing secretary, said the sentiment expressed by the INC and El Shaddai was shared by the majority of the people.

He said that while he did not think the statement was meant to pressure the Sandiganbayan and the Ombudsman on the issue of Estrada's supposed house arrest, it could "enlighten" civil society on the need for unity and reconciliation. Members of civil society and groups that had participated in the Edsa II revolt of January 2001 filed on Tuesday criminal charges against Ms Macapagal, Defensor and ranking police officials for allowing Estrada to breach his detention rules.

According to Defensor, the statement

INC BACKS/ A22

REUTERS

MABUHAY OR ALOHA!
Camile Velasco (right) and Jasmine Trias pose at a party for "American Idol" finalists. The two Filipina teeners who now live in Hawaii are among the Top 12 of the FOX network's wildly popular singing contest. They are shown here at a party on Wednesday celebrating their accomplishments in West Hollywood, California. The winner wins a major recording contract.

'Someone higher' let his dad out, says Jinggoy

By Armand N. Nocum and Carlito Pablo

JOSEPH Estrada yesterday admitted visiting his 98-year-old mother in Greenhills, San Juan, and dropping by his Polk Street residence on Dec. 25, but claimed that he had permission from the Sandiganbayan.

Despite his father's own admission, Jinggoy Estrada said the ex-President did not visit Polk Street.

"(Special Prosecutor Dennis) Villa-Ignacio is probably dreaming. He's always dreaming," Estrada's eldest son said in Davao City.

Jinggoy said Estrada left Camp Capinpin for his rest house only twice: last Christmas and on Feb. 17, for Jinggoy's birthday lunch celebration.

The latter occasion was attended by Jinggoy's fellow national candidates of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino minus standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr.

Jinggoy said Estrada himself had sought permission from, if not pleaded with, his "jailers."

"Pakiusapan nga, eh," Jinggoy said.

Asked if the authorization was made at the level of the Police Security and Protection Office head, Chief Supt.

SOMEONE/ A22

Reason for Estrada's transfer no longer exists

By Dona Pazzibugan and Armand Nocum

SPECIAL Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio revived his long-running protest against the transfer of ousted President Estrada from the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) to Camp Capinpin in Tanay.

Villa-Ignacio, who said at the time of the transfer last Oct.16 that the prosecution had not been informed, asked the Sandiganbayan special division, which is trying the former President for plunder, to return Estrada to the VMMC.

Villa-Ignacio asked the court to immediately rule on their motion which they first filed on Oct.30 last year.

Government prosecutors said that the reason for Estrada's transfer to Camp Capinpin has ceased to exist.

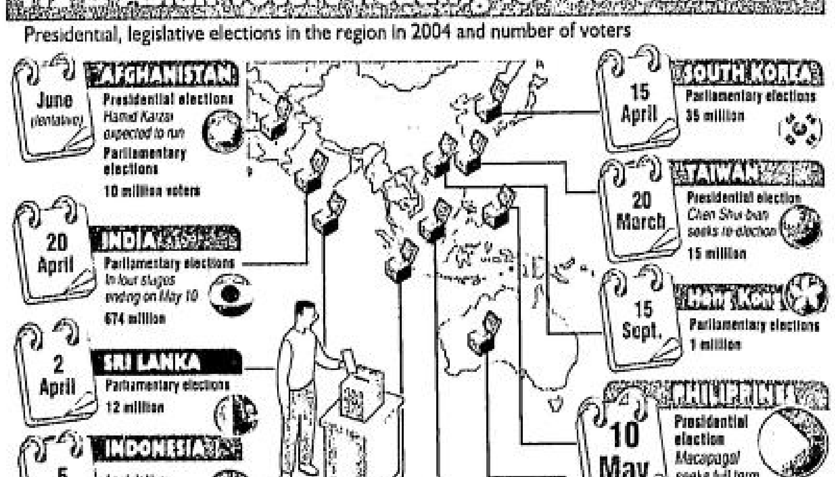
"A very serious threat involving Estrada" was the reason given by Philippine National Police chief, Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

It was Ebdane who asked the Sandiganbayan's permission to allow the

REASON/ A8

1.2 B Asian voters heading for the ballot box

Presidential, legislative elections in the region in 2004 and number of voters



AFP

1.2B Asians from Afghanistan to the Philippines going to polls

HONG KONG—More than a billion ballots will be cast and counted in 11 different Asian elections this year, as democracy becomes slowly entrenched in the world's most populous region, political scientists told Agence France Presse this week.

On May 10, Filipino voters have to choose between incumbent President Macapagal-Arroyo and political novice film star Fernando Poe Jr. in an election that has so far favored personalities over issues.

"This is not going to be a decision-making election because the people really won't have a say ... which will remain with the heads of the old clans who have always run the country," said political scientist Michael DeGolyer from Hong Kong's Baptist University.

"The trend is most definitely a move toward more democracy," said Robert Broadfoot analyst with the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy think tank.

Of course, he added, "democracy is not in itself a terrific good unless you have the institutions to support it and in Asia, there (often) aren't the institutions to support it ... Hong Kong, for instance, does have the institutions, but not the democracy. The Philippines has the democracy but not the institutions."

India, with 674 million voters among 1.2 billion people, has the world's biggest electorate and will be calling out the voters from New Delhi to Bangalore in a rolling election that starts on April 20 and continues in stages until May 10.

The voting process in the world's largest democracy has often been undermined in the past by electoral malpractice and violence. But a booming economy and political sophistication are now pushing the country toward real, entrenched democracy, political scientists in Delhi told AFP.

"The conduct of polls and the awareness among political parties about the moral code of conduct are improving," said B.G. Verghese, honorary research professor at the independent Center for Policy Research in New Delhi.

Several measures have been brought

1.2B ASIANS/ A8

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/03/12/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

Citigroup sees close GMA win

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

CITIGROUP, the world's largest financial services concern, expects a two-horse race in the May 10 presidential elections with President Macapagal-Arroyo likely to nose out movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. down the wire.

Citigroup sees a win by the President as a "credit positive development" in contrast to broad investors' sentiment of uncertainty in a Poe administration.

"Despite its flaws, continuing an Arroyo presidency is the least risky option for the Philippines. We think the risk of policy mistakes under a Poe administration is high to deserve caution," Citigroup said.

In its March 10 study, Citigroup said: "Ms Arroyo has a more clearly defined strategy to win the election than Mr. Poe but the fight is expected to be close. We think Ms Arroyo has a better chance of winning than Mr Poe but the margin of victory will likely be narrow."

Citigroup has made the President a 3 to 2 favorite to beat Poe in the election. The company based its forecast on the recent surveys of the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia which showed the President catching up with Poe in the ratings game less than two weeks into the 90-day campaign period.

The American company also reckoned that since presidential candidates Raul Roco and Panfilo Lacson were unlikely to back out, this could hurt Poe's efforts to get more anti-Arroyo votes.

Citigroup said the President's "efficient and indefatigable campaign" and "strong political machinery" would give her the "marginal advantage" over Poe.

It noted that the "party vote" would start playing a stronger role with the start of the local campaign on March 25 and the President was the only one with 100-percent representation at all levels of elective positions available on May 10. It estimated that Poe only has less than 25 percent representation, Roco has less than 4 percent, and Lacson has less than 2 percent.

Still, despite the President's recent surge in the surveys, Citigroup said that with two months to go before elections, "we cannot discount the risk of Poe's popularity gaining ground and lingering fundamental challenges regardless of the election outcome."

Citigroup continues to recommend an "underweight" on Philippine bonds largely due to "emerging hefty risks associated with a looming FPJ presidency."

Voting starts with absentee balloting today

By Jerome Aning

VOTING for the 2004 elections officially opens today, with some 2,300 Filipino seafarers becoming the first to cast their votes for president, vice president, 12 senators and one party-list representative under the new Absentee Voting Law.

The voting is being held in various Philippine embassies, consulates and foreign service establishments abroad where election boards have been set up in 77 voting centers worldwide.

The schedule of voting for overseas Filipinos is being done in two tiers. Filipino seafarers with approved application to vote in absentia may cast their votes within 60 days starting today. Voting for land-based Filipino voters overseas begins on April 11.

According to Commission on Elections Commissioner Florentino Tuason, there are 358,669 registered overseas Filipino voters, 2,200 of whom are sea-based.

The seafarers were asked to indicate the country in which they intended to vote. The names of the eligible seafarers are in lists provided to the Philippine embassies and consulates. To ensure the seafarers will vote only once, the name of each seaman will appear in only one port.

Two systems of voting are being used for overseas absentee voting: personal voting and voting by mail. Mail voting is allowed for land-based voters in three countries only, the United Kingdom, Japan and Canada.

The ballot boxes overseas will remain in the voting stations until the last vote is cast. The ballots will be counted manually when the voting stations close at 3 p.m. on May 10. The results will be transmitted to the Comelec office in Manila as soon as counting ends.

Undersecretary for Special Concerns Rafael Seguis, who heads the overseas absentee voting secretariat, is in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to oversee the preparations for the voting in the Middle East. His deputy, Catherine Maceda, is in Singapore for the same purpose.

Eight voting centers have more than 10,000 registered voters: Hong Kong, Riyadh, Jeddah, Singapore, Al-Khobar, Kuwait, Rome and Abu Dhabi.

Some 757 Special Boards of Election Inspectors (SBEIs) consisting of 2,271 individuals will oversee the overseas voting process and undertake the counting of the ballots. The boards' membership consists of foreign service personnel and members of Filipino communities abroad. *With a report from Martin P. Marfil*

Lim negative in drug test

By Christian Esguerra

SENATORIAL candidate Alfredo Lim yesterday said he had complied with the Commission on Elections' requirement to undergo drug test as a requirement for the May 10 elections.

In a letter, Lim said he had his test at the National Bureau of Investigation laboratory on Feb. 9.

"I was found negative of any use of prohibited drug," said Lim, who also sent the INQUIRER a copy of the drug test report.

The Comelec had earlier published a resolution in the INQUIRER, announcing that Lim was among 15 senatorial candidates who were yet to submit their drug test results as of Feb. 13.

The resolution was signed by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and his commissioners.

The announcement was a surprise, particularly because Lim was known for his efforts to eliminate the drug menace.

Lim even adopted the slogan "The law applies to all, otherwise none at all (sic)" during his term as Manila mayor and when he ran for president in 1998.

"The hallmark of my public service expanding for more than 50 years is respect for the rule of law," he wrote in the letter.

"I have on several occasions put my life on the line to defend the rule of law," said the longtime Manila policeman and former NBI director.

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Palace flip-flop on Nazario a problem for SC–Pangilinan

By Tonette Orejas, *PDI Central Luzon Desk,* **and Philip C. Tubeza**

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If it is true that the appointment had been put "on hold," as presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye "clarified" on Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said it was going to pose a problem in the high court's work.

Should the tribunal reach a deadlock on any urgent case, Pangilinan explained, how would the current 14 justices break it? No less than 15 were needed to do this, he said. He did not specify which high-profile case the SC needed to decide on immediately.

In view of this, Pangilinan said, the bigger concern was that the vacancy could be filled only after July, or when the next president takes his or her oath of office. The 90-day period for the appointment of another justice (to replace retired Associate Justice Josue Belosillo) had lapsed, he pointed out, and the election ban on the President's authority to approve appointments began on Thursday.

Pangilinan also said the Judicial and Bar Council, of which he is a member, was "puzzled" that the Palace had broken protocol by not giving the council notice of the appointment, which was signed on Feb. 11.

The JBC was created in 1987 with the principal function of recommending appointees to the judiciary.

Pangilinan said the procedure "ever since" was for the President to write a letter to the council upon approving an appointment, or if no one in the council's list of nominees had been chosen.

"In (Nazario's) case, none of these steps were taken," Pangilinan told reporters on Wednesday night in Angeles City. Asked why he thought this happened, the senator said, "We also want to know."

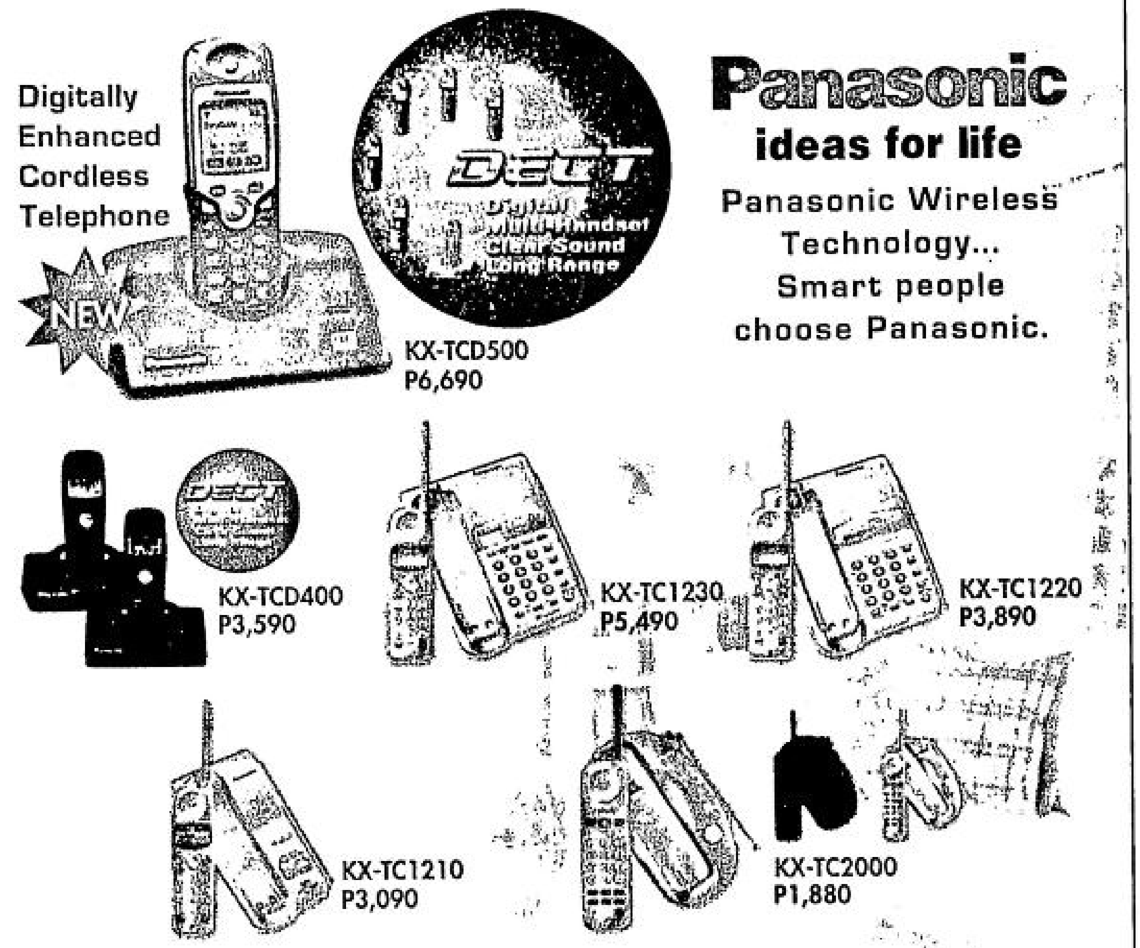
"All the information we have are from newspaper reports," he said.

Pangilinan conceded that the President could not be impeached for her failure to fill up the vacancy with the 90-day period mandated by the Constitution.

Also yesterday, a suspended Malabon judge asked the SC to immediately declare Nazario as its newest member and order her to take her new office.

In a 24-page petition, controversial Judge Florentino V. Floro said President Macapagal-Arroyo could no longer "constitutionally" recall the appointment.

Nazario's failure to take her oath should not stop her from sitting in the tribunal, Floro said. Under the law, he insisted, Nazario had been "duly appointed, already qualified, expressly accepted her office/appointment ... and the taking of oath is not mandatory but merely directory."



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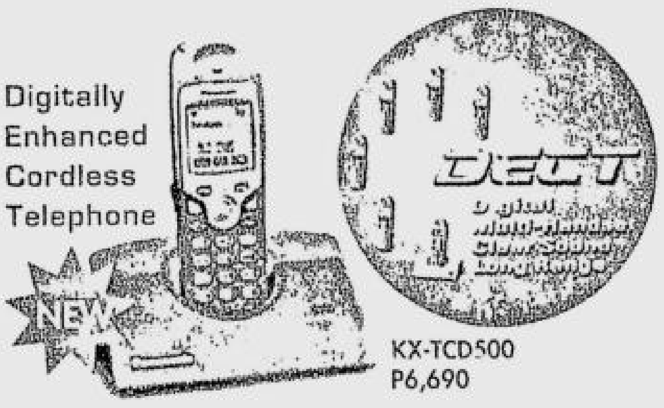

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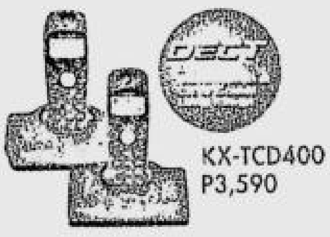

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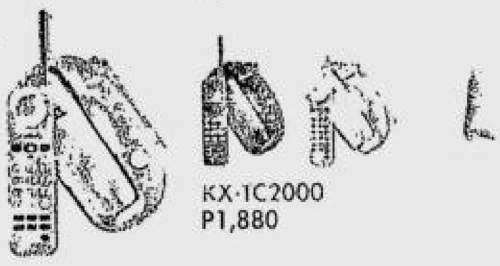

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Joystick						•
Large LCD with Blue Backlight						•
Lighted Handset Keypad	•	•	•	•		•
Phone Directory	11 stations	30 stations	30 stations	30 stations	20 stations	200 stations
Handset Locator (Paging)	•	•	•	•		•
Intercom w/ 2-way paging			•	•		
Speakerphone			•	•		•
Dual Keypad			•	•		
Digital Answering System				•		
Recording Time				up to 15 mins		
Multi-Handset Capability (Optional)						up to 6 handsets

*Note: Caller ID Subscription required. Pr[illegible] (SRP based) and features are subject to change without prior notice.

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Actress/Interior Design Consultant

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By Cynthia D. Balana and Juliet L. Javellana

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"As one of two front-runners, Poe should be more careful with his pronouncements at this volatile period specially with his scarce articulations on economic policy," Salceda said.

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"He is admittedly popular as a movie actor but people are starting to realize that it takes more than directing a movie to succeed and to run this country," Drilon said of Poe, whose only known managerial skill is producing movies and running his own business.

"The people will realize that indeed it would take more than motherhood statements; we need competence, we need experience," said Drilon of Liberal Party, which is allied to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

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Salceda said that Poe's declaration on debt restructuring should highlight the government's achievements in refinancing its short-term debt to longer-term loans.

He said the government was able to reduce the share of short-term borrowings from the country's P3.1 trillion debts from 44 percent to 31 percent in less than three years amid a rising budget deficit, and still maintain a 50-50 mix between local and foreign borrowings.

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Berroya retires, dreads prospect of Lacson presidency

By Christian V. Esguerra

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Mr. Bob C. Mirani, Chairman of the Board of Trustees since 1995 to the present, will be this year's keynote speaker. He was CCFI president from 1995 to 2001 and later, was elected Chairman of the Board from 2002 to the present.

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Indeed, the Foundation has tremendously gone through and hurdled numerous challenges to reach its present stature. Somehow, its dynamism never wanes through the years in its unselfish and relevant missions in this fast changing world. The success of the CCFI does not revolve only upon the few good men and women who in the past and present constitute the governing body of the organization. It lies upon the numerous people and supporters who believe in the movement and who contributed unselfishly their time, money and efforts to give substance to its aims and objectives.

54th ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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China probers find no sign of collision on RP cargo ship

BEIJING—Chinese port inspectors have examined a Philippine cargo ship to help determine if it was involved in a deadly collision with a French trawler in January, but authorities said Thursday they were unable to reach any conclusions.

French authorities think the Philippine-flagged Seattle Trader may have collided with the Bugaled Breizh off the southern coast of Britain on Jan. 15, killing five French members of the trawler's crew.

In Paris, French police investigators are preparing to leave for China to inspect the freighter. They hold an international warrant for the vessel.

Nine other boats are also considered suspects, a French Justice Ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

The offending vessel left the scene after the accident, authorities say.

Seattle Trader docked in the southern Chinese Port city of Fengchengang in Guangxi Province on Wednesday, said an official from the Fengchengang Maritime Affairs Bureau, reached by telephone. He would give only his surname, Su.

The official said inspectors boarded the ship and inspected the license and the condition of the boat and asked the crew about its recent itinerary.

"We have inspected the ship and we found there are some signs of rust falling off. But there are no signs of a serious impact," Su said. "The rust falling off could have been caused by any number of things, so we cannot conclude it was involved in the collision."

Su would not say who instructed the officials to inspect the boat or when the inspection was done.

The owner of the ship, Victoria Ship Management, reportedly has denied it was involved in the collision. It cited a Canadian Coast Guard investigation requested by French authorities that said the vessel was more than 16 kilometers from the trawler when it sank. *AP/AFP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, March 12, 2004
2nd Week of Lent
1st Reading: Gen 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-28
Gospel: Mt 21:33-43, 45-46

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders, "Listen to another example: 'There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a hole for the winepress, built a watchtower, leased the vineyard to tenants and then went to a distant country. When harvest time came, the landowner sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the harvest. But the tenants seized his servants, beat one, killed another and stoned another.

"Again the owner sent more servants, but they were treated in the same way.

"Finally, he sent his son, thinking: 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they thought: 'This is the one who is to inherit the vineyard. Let us kill him and his inheritance will be ours.' So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"Now, what will the owner of the vineyard do with the tenants when he comes?" They said to him, "He will bring those evil to an evil end, and lease the vineyard to others who will pay him in due time."

And Jesus replied, "Have you never read what the Scriptures say? The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone. This was the Lord's doing; and we marvel at it. Therefore I say to you: the kingdom of heaven will be taken from you and given to a people who will yield a harvest."

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard these parables, they realized that Jesus was referring to them. They would have arrested him, but they were afraid of the crowd who regarded him as a prophet.

Commentary

The vine was a symbol of Israel.

"You brought a vine out of Egypt;
To plant it you drove out the nations.
Before it you cleared the ground;
It took root and spread through the land." (Ps 79)

So when Jesus tells this story about the vineyard he is really talking about his country and the people who ran it. They were quite aware of this, "The chief priests and the Pharisees realized that Jesus was referring to them." It wasn't a story to flatter them; it enraged them. That means that it frightened them—lying just behind anger there is always fear. (This is a useful awareness: when you see an angry person you are looking at a fearful person.) They were frightened because he said they were going to lose power. They were religious leaders and he told them, "The kingdom of heaven will be taken from you and given to people who will yield a harvest." This is not just a story about a comfortable "long ago"; it is for the Church of today. If we are not "producing the goods," others will. Many people, experiencing lack of community and spiritual support in their parishes, are looking to new religions and cults for support. But if we are sorry only because we are losing in a "numbers game", then we have to think more deeply.

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Bongbong sees Lakas hand in rival's challenge

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. sees the hand of the administration party Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats behind the decision of Mayor Roger Fariñas to challenge him in the gubernatorial post.

A known opposition ally, Marcos said Lakas officials promised him "a lot of things" early into the election period in their supposed attempt to court him to switch to their side.

"The administration is being very aggressive. After the election, I will tell you what they offered me to (join) Lakas," Marcos said.

Pressed to reveal what these offers were, Marcos said: "A lot of things. They asked me what they want and identified my projects that they can support just as long as I go Lakas. But I said no thanks."

He said Fariñas' entry in the gubernatorial race was a mere result of his rejection of the offers made by Lakas representatives.

If at all, Marcos said Fariñas succeeded in polarizing Ilocos Norte politics.

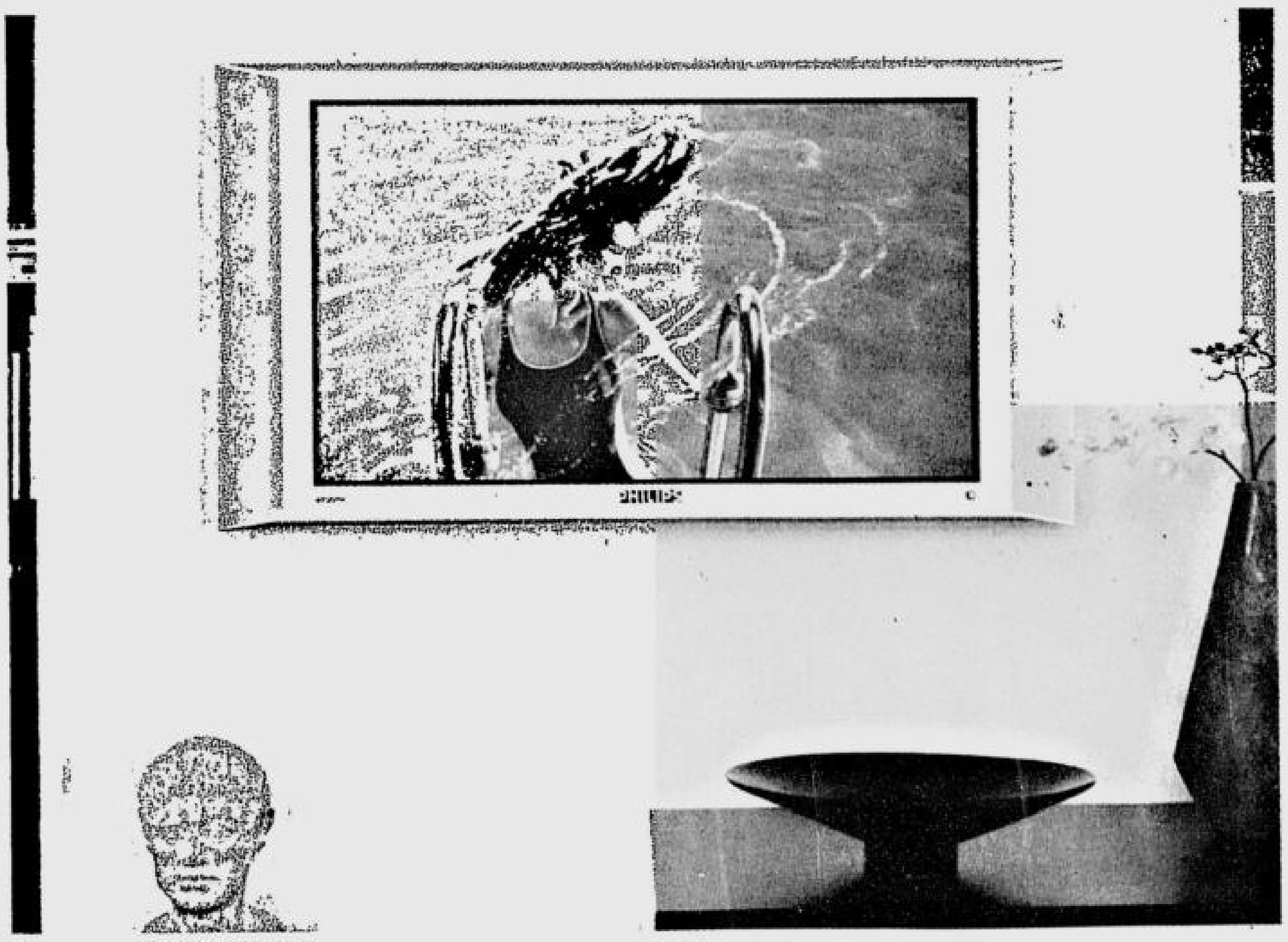
"The entry of my opponent has polarized the province. That is something that we just have to handle. If the intention is to give me problems or to soften me up for whatever it was, it did the opposite," Marcos said.

He said incumbent mayors, many of them belong to the administration party, have remained loyal to him.

The mayors, led by Sarrat Mayor Corazon Abad who is president of the province's league of mayors, met with Marcos on Tuesday and reportedly signified their support for the governor.

Asked to comment on Fariñas' criticisms on his governance, Marcos said: "He has to attack me because he cannot show anything. Instead of showing what he has done, he resorted to striking the opponent. That is called negative politics . . . a sure act of desperation."

"As I always say, there is no secret in this province. You know what his character is. It did not change. They attack and harm other people. We will oppose them with smile and kindness," Marcos said.



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DPWH plunder case rushed to stop flight of suspects

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE SANDIGANBAYAN expedited the plunder case for the P134-million Department of Public Works and Highways auto repair scam due to reports that most of those implicated have fled the country.

Presiding Justice Minita Chito-Nazario yesterday allowed the case to be raffled off, despite only one complaint.

Court rules say that cases are only raffled off after it has received at least five complaints.

The case fell on the anti-graft court's second division headed by Justice Edilberto Sandoval.

Chief Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio asked for the immediate case raffle.

'Legal shortcut'

He said they would move to cancel the passports of those who have already fled the country, so that they may be deported back.

"We avail of this legal shortcut first. Then if we don't succeed that's the time we opt for extradition," he said.

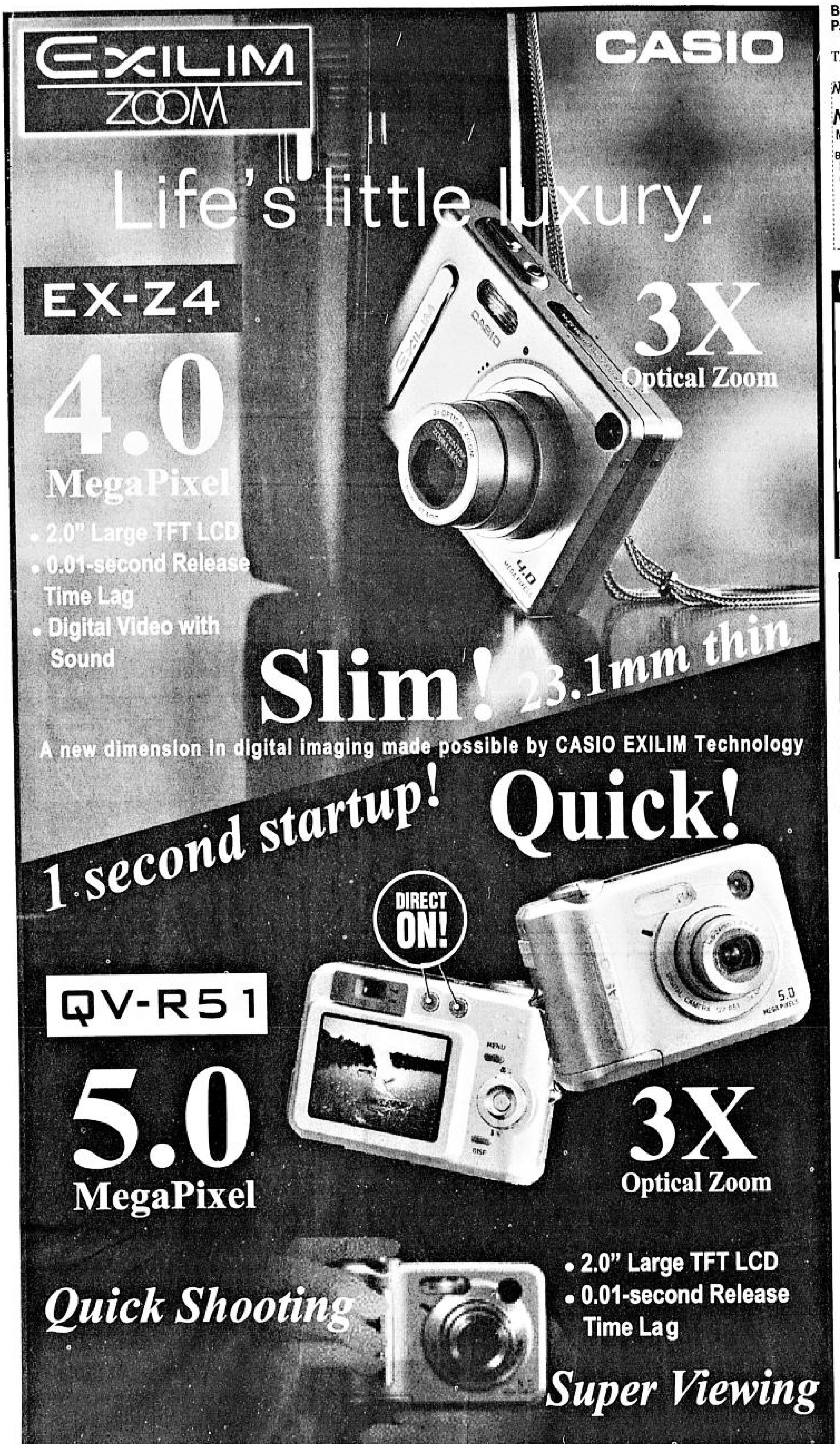
He said they would also ask the court to issue hold departure orders against those who are still here.

With the case raffled, the arrest warrants for DPWH motorpool chief Maximo Borje, 19 other DPWH officials and 10 auto parts suppliers may soon be issued.

Plunder is a nonbailable offense.

Borje allegedly raked in P82.3 million of the total P134 million from the spurious repair of hundreds of DPWH vehicles from March to December 2001.

The Office of the Special Prosecutor filed the plunder charges last Monday.



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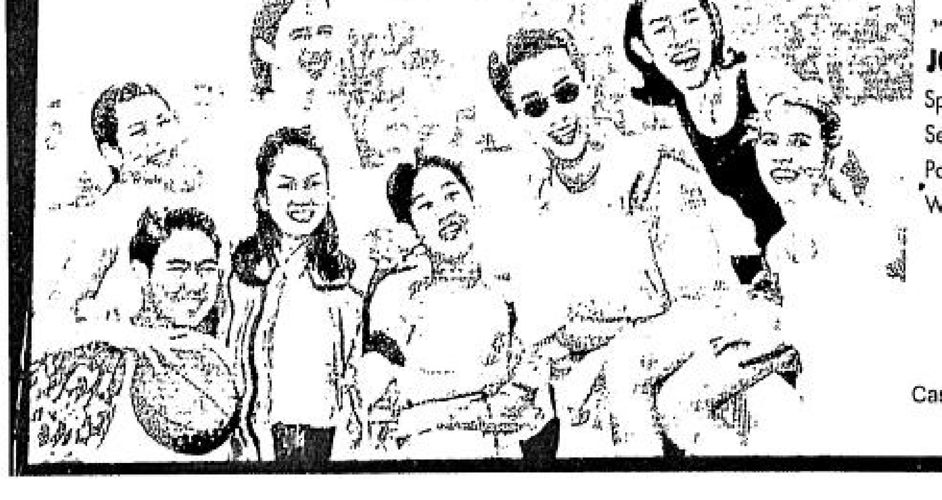

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For once, Abalos draws praise for junking automated polls

By Michael Lim Ubac

EVEN his staunchest critics were impressed.

Instead of brickbats, Commission on Elections (Comelec) Chair Benjamin Abalos this time was commended by two of his most vocal detractors, following his decision to scrap the planned partial automation of the election count in May.

"It is good thing he listened to the clamor of the people," said opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. from Surigao City, where the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino ticket was campaigning yesterday. In this respect, Abalos should be commended, according to the reelectionist senator who had sued the poll chief before the Ombudsman's Office for bungling what could have been the initial implementation of computerized elections.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan was more straightforward in heaping praises on Abalos.

"This decision will usher in renewed faith in the Comelec as an institution, which in turn will redound to faith and trust in the electoral process," said the administration senator.

"It is crucial that the Comelec remains credible in the eyes of the public. The decision, in a sense, achieved this, and prevented the further erosion of the people's confidence in the poll body."

Pimentel said on Tuesday that Abalos was resurrecting the use of the Automated Voting Machines (AVMs) to escape the alleged criminal liability arising from the voided automation contract. "I think Abalos himself admits that it was the criticisms of his intention to resurrect the use of the AVMs that compelled the Comelec to junk the idea," he added.

Pangilinan called on his colleagues Monday to scrap the selective automation then being pushed by Abalos because the joint congressional resolution authorizing it had been rendered academic by the high court decision nullifying the contract.

He said Abalos' move was questionable because Comelec itself admitted last November that it would be difficult to implement both manual and selective automation of the elections at the same time.

By junking the planned partial computerization, however, Abalos "saved" the entire electoral process, thus erasing doubts that he and the other commissioners were working double time to perpetuate the reign of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Pangalinan said. The Comelec showed it was sensitive to the public pulse, he added.

"Why should the Comelec risk being caught in a serious legal tussle that may affect the credibility of the institution?" Pangilinan asked.

The senator added that lawmakers want automation, but with the turn of events and the decision shelving the contract, concerns have been raised by some sectors on the possible trending that might take place (in a partial automated count). "Pursuing the proposal was just 'curing' what had been already voided," he said.

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1.2B Asians from Afghanistan to the Philippines going to polls

From page A1

in to reduce the opportunities for electoral malpractice, including the introduction of electronic voting machines, and this would make this year's vote both "fairer and quicker" than those in the past, Verghese said.

At the same time, the ruling Hindu nationalist party of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, currently well ahead in the polls, is trying to capitalize on improved relations with neighboring Pakistan to secure the votes of India's Muslims, promising more peaceful polling.

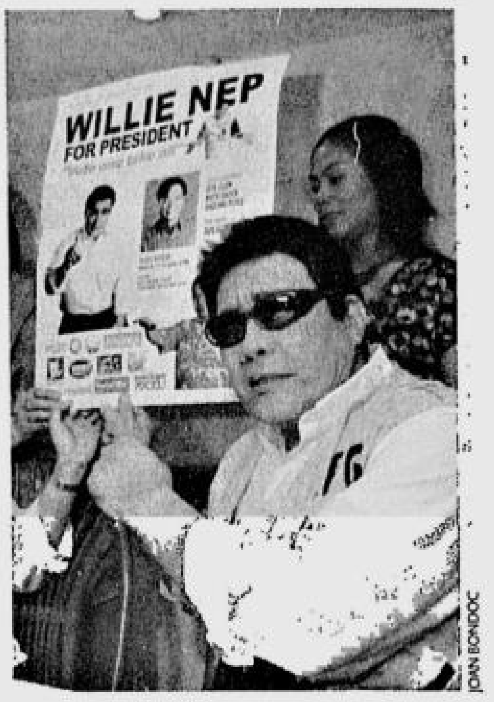
According to Broadfoot, director of the American think tank on Asia, the way India is perceived abroad will be changed as a result.

"What I think India is saying to the world is: 'Look, let's celebrate what we've achieved in terms of prosperity,' and not calling Hindus to arms," Broadfoot told AFP. "That can only be good."

Of course, even before this mammoth political exercise—the world's largest election—is completed, the democratic process will already have been tested elsewhere round Asia.

Toss-up in Taiwan

In Taiwan—an island which Beijing still considers a renegade province—more than 15 million voters are due to go to the polls on March 20 to elect a president and take part in two referendums.



JOAN BONDOC

WILL the real FPJ debate? No, he won't. But Willie Nepomuceno all dressed up as the man to beat will for his show "Willie Nep 4 president (Vote 1 take all)," a satire on the major players of the upcoming election.

The voting is expected to be a close-run affair between supporters of incumbent President Chen Shui-bian, a Taiwanese nationalist opposed by Beijing, and his opponent, Lien Chan, backed by the mainland.

But the fact that the island is voting for its leaders at all—the only part of greater China to do so—is a sign of growing democracy in Asia, Taiwan's supporters say. Even until 2000, the Taiwanese were unable to vote for their presidents and the fact that they can today shows how things are changing, pro-democracy activists say.

Smooth transition

A day after the Taiwanese poll, the 10 million voters of Malaysia will have a chance to cast their first ballots in 22 years without the dominating presence in the election of former leader Mahathir Mohammad.

The transition of power last October between Mahathir and his successor, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, has been largely smooth and that process has been healthy for democracy in Malaysia, political analysts there say.

Badawi's moderate ruling UNMO party is expected to see off a challenge from the Islamic Party PAS which surged in support at the previous polls though opponents have criticized the short time given for campaigning for the polls.

In Sri Lanka, the country's 12 million voters hope the elections due on April 2 will settle a power struggle which broke out late last year between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe over the peace process in the country's long-running civil war.

The sparring between the two politicians has put on hold the peace process and slowed Sri Lanka's economic growth and most voters hope the election will resolve the situation.

Weak democracy

Elsewhere in the region, there are fewer such hopes.

On April 5, 147 million Indonesians will be called to the polls for the first of three elections expected this year in the sprawling archipelago; a legislative poll to be followed by two rounds of presidential elections.

Political scientist Douglas Ramage of the Asia Foundation told reporters in Jakarta last month that the democratic process in Indonesia was still weak after years of one-party rule which ended in 1998.

"The problem is that citizens don't know what they should expect from democracy ... They don't link voting with accountability and this is a great concern in terms of the quality of democracy that emerges from these elections," he said.

Political malaise

South Korea's political malaise is deepening ahead of April 15 general elections and is not expected to be helped by efforts to unseat President Roh Moo-hyun this week in the National Assembly through unprecedented impeachment proceedings.

Roh, a former human rights lawyer, narrowly won election in December 2002, unexpectedly beating a conservative candidate.

"Conservatives have never accepted that defeat," Lee Chung-hee, political science professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, told AFP this week.

The political turmoil shows how fragile South Korean democracy remains 17 years after military dictators surrendered power through free elections for the first time. Roh has been dogged by a hostile parliament controlled by the conservative Grand National Party and impeachment proceedings stem from charges that he campaigned illegally for Roh loyalists in the pro-government Uri Party.

Beijing alarmed

Watching all this happen, the political leadership in China, the largest country in the region and one where elections are not allowed, is alarmed by the push to entrench democracy around it.

"In every direction that Beijing looks, elections seem to be a threatening factor," said DeGolyer, the political scientist from Hong Kong. That is why China is made nervous by pressure from Hong Kong for universal suffrage in 2007.

Prof. Joseph Cheng of Hong Kong's City University believes the election of a new legislature in the former British colony in September could prove unsettling for Beijing. "If democrats win a majority in the legislative elections here—which they could—then they could cause enormous trouble for China," he said.

US-backed polls

And at the same time, many analysts express alarm at US-backed plans for elections in Afghanistan in June at a time when the country is still beset by poor security conditions and voter registration has barely started.

Elections now would not be credible and that would undermine the push to bring real democracy to the region, they say. *AFP*

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Reason for Estrada's transfer no longer exists

From page A1

Estrada transfer. Ebdane also clarified then that the transfer had no "direct connection" with the visit of US President George W. Bush who was arriving on Oct. 18.

Sick man

"Erap is not being tried for a military offense, nor is he being held for violations of the Articles of War. There is no medical facility there," he argued before the Sandiganbayan special division during the hearing last Wednesday.

"He is a sick man because there is a threat of him being paralyzed forever. A sick person should be in the hospital," Villa-Ignacio insisted.

The hearing is being conducted on the possible contempt charges to be filed against Ebdane and Chief Supt. Roland Sacramento, head of the Police Security and Protection Office.

Stop 'loose talk'

Villa-Ignacio also sajd that Estrada's transfer to the VMMC will stop "loose talk" that he had been staying at his rest house across his detention quarters or even wandering farther out of Camp Capinpin.

Villa-Ignacio also described as "inhuman and cruel" the moves of Estrada's court-appointed lawyers who are blocking efforts to return Estrada to the VMMC.

"He is a sick person. He should be in a hospital. He should not be allowed to spend time in a military camp out in the mountain," Villa-Ignacio reiterated.

Sandiganbayan special division chair Minita Chico-Nazario asked Villa-Ignacio to put his request in writing for further study.

She also asked the prosecutors to file another motion, saying that their previous motion was deemed "mooted" when the anti-graft court granted Estrada's wish last Dec. 23 to go to the US to undergo surgery.

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Ship captain tells probers . . .

From page A1

Sayyaf claim, but haven't ruled it out. The PCG has confirmed that a man— identified by the Abu Sayyaf as its bomber—was among the missing, but has cautioned that anyone could make such claims.

'No status' passenger

Ferrer, the first to take the witness stand, said Alvarado was considered a "no status" passenger because nobody had so far come forward to claim that Alvarado was aboard the ship or that he was missing. Five others, including two adults and three children, have also been declared no status passengers.

Manzo confirmed that an explosion was heard first before smoke and fire began sweeping through the ship and not the other way around.

At the time of the explosion, Manzo said he was in his quarters two decks above the tourist area and was changing into civilian clothes.

Bright flash

"There was a big boom, a big bright flash," said Ferrer, narrating the testimony of Alvin Reyes, a crew member of SuperFerry 14 whom he interviewed. Reyes was helping a female passenger back to Room 203 in the tourist area when he heard the explosion.

Ferrer said that Reyes was thrown two and a half meters away, and when he got up he saw the passenger covered by part of the ceiling. Reyes also saw several small fires breaking out.

Reyes then ran to the other parts of the ship, and saw the deformed door of one of the cabins open inward. Reyes, who suffered burns, believed that passengers were trapped inside that cabin.

Ferrer said the fire reached the promenade deck of the ship, which was above the A-deck.

Diagrams

Using a PowerPoint, Ferrer presented diagrams of each deck showing through color-coding where the rescued and missing passengers, as well as the casualties and the no status passengers were assigned. SuperFerry officials, including Ferrer, had interviewed all the rescued passengers of SuperFerry 14.

Ferrer said he visited the ship twice, first while it was still burning and after it had cooled down.

Manzo said he could not give the exact cause of the fire because he was on the bridge of the ship, but later said it was probably due to the explosion.

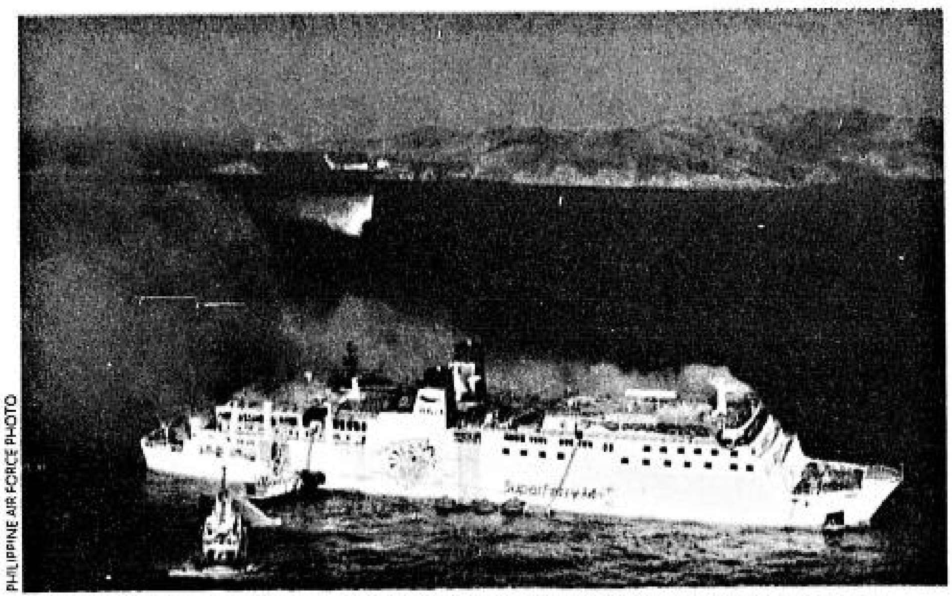
The fire was not caused by problems in the engine, by the vehicles aboard the ship or by electrical malfunctions, according to the captain.

2 missing crewmen

Asked whether he had spoken to any member of his crew who had direct knowledge of the fire, he said the two missing crew members had knowledge of the fire.

Manzo was also grilled about the fire-fighting and fire alarm system aboard the ship, as well as the number of crew who were awake and on duty at the time of the explosion. He said there were four fire fighting teams dispatched to the burning areas before he ordered the ship abandoned.

As of 5:30 p.m. yesterday, three more bodies were retrieved from the ship. All in all 654 passengers and 153 crew members have been accounted for. *With a report from AP*



PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE PHOTO

SUPERFERRY 14, a 10,192-ton ship caught fire on Feb.27 off Corregidor Island with 899 passengers on board. The toll: 27 bodies recovered; 92 still missing.

Malaysian peacekeepers coming Sunday

By Alcuin Papa

AN ADVANCE party of Malaysian observers are due to arrive in the country on Sunday to prepare the ground for a mission of foreign ceasefire monitors ahead of the resumption of the peace negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MNLF).

According to MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu, the Malaysian contingent is part of the International Monitoring Team from various member-countries of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The observers are composed of the armed forces of Malaysia and several Muslim countries.

Kabalu said the nine-man advance survey team would arrive on March 14, but Armed Forces Vice President Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia declined to give specific dates.

"It is not for us nor the MILF to disseminate the itinerary or be specific about it. All I can say is that the advance survey team would stay in the country for nine days. They would go to Mindanao but as to the specific itinerary, I would not be at liberty to divulge that," Garcia said.

From Manila, the all-Malaysian team will fly to Zamboanga City and call on local government and military officials, Kabalu said. The group is also to visit Camp Salman in Sirawai, Zamboanga del Sur, which was attacked last Tuesday by MILF guerrillas.

The team is also scheduled to visit Davao City to meet with local and military officials in the area, followed by a trip to the MILF-controlled Salahudin Camp in Taragum, Davao del Norte.

On the third day, the team will pay courtesy calls to local officials in General Santos City and receive a briefing from military officials. They will then fly to Sultan Kudarat to visit the MILF's Camp Halid and meet with rebel commanders.

The Malaysian observers will proceed to Cotabato City on the fourth day and visit Camp Bader in Talayan, Camp Omar in Datu Piang and Shariff Aguak towns in Maguindanao. *AFP*

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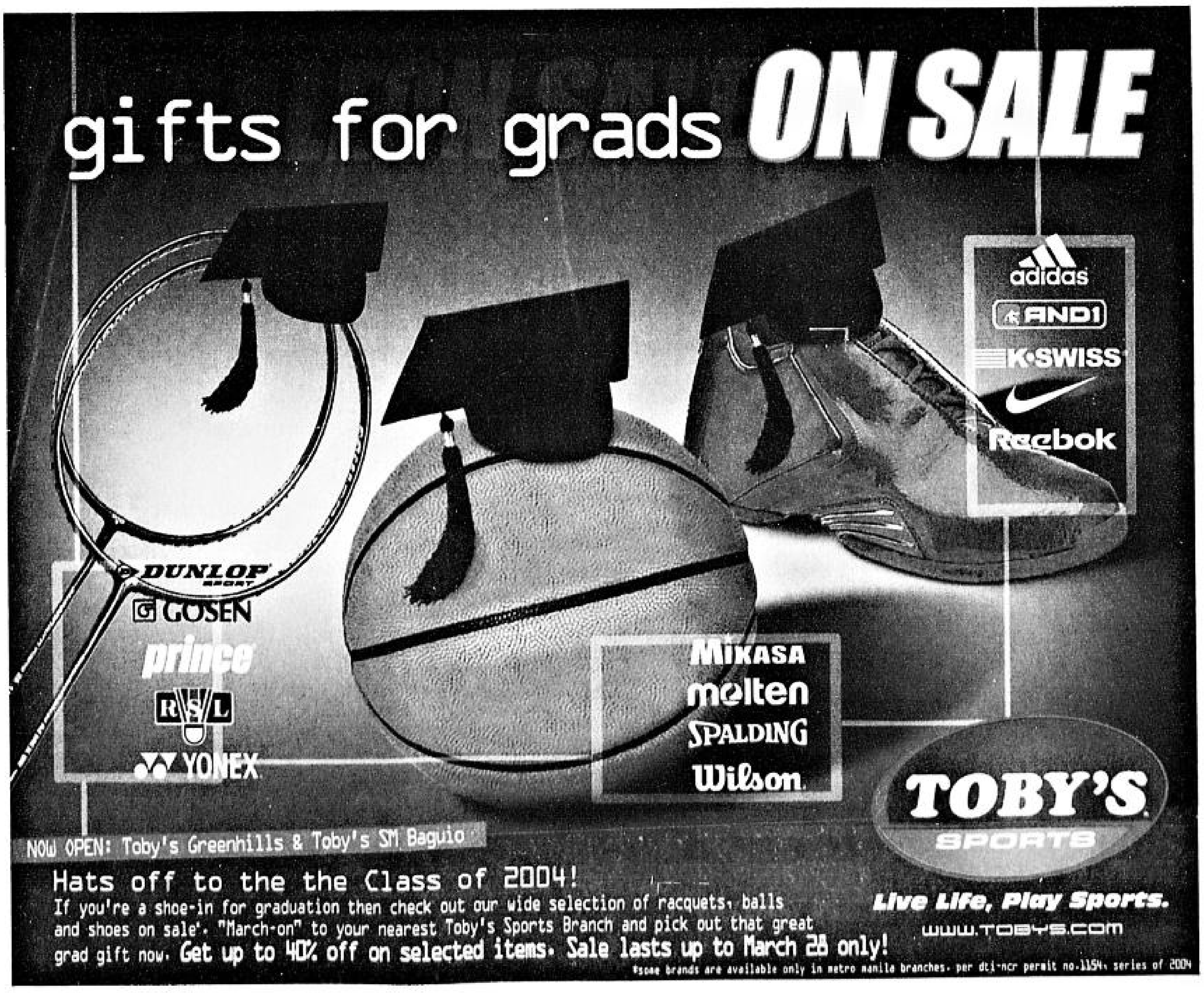
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186 killed in train blasts in Madrid

MADRID—More than 186 people were killed and more than 1,000 injured in yesterday's coordinated explosions on four trains in Madrid, sources on the scene said.

In what appeared to be a deliberate attack staged only 72 hours ahead of Spanish general elections, the blasts went off on a long-distance high-speed carrier and two suburban trains packed with commuters.

Government spokesperson Eduardo Zaplana swiftly blamed armed Basque separatist group ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna) for the carnage, condemning what he called "an attack on Spanish democracy."

He dubbed ETA a "criminal gang of killers."

At the time of the blasts they were located at one of the capital's two main railway stations, Atocha, and at two other stations in a southeastern suburb, police said.

One train was severed neatly in two places, after blasts ripped gaping holes into a passenger car and left a gnarled mass of charred metal where seats and aisles once had been.

Police and firemen evacuated buildings around Atocha station, where interior ministry sources said 29 people had been killed, for fear of more explosions.

Interior Minister Angel Acebes was at the station, joining other senior government members including Deputy Prime Minister Rodrigo Rato and Madrid mayor Alberto Ruiz-Gallardon.

Emergency services on site were carrying the injured on stretchers to waiting ambulances, while passersby sat stunned on curbsides, in blood-soaked and ripped clothing.

Meanwhile, all hospitals in and around the capital issued an urgent appeal for blood donations, as hundreds of injured continued to arrive.

Basque regional government leader Juan Jose Ibarretxe, a moderate nationalist pushing for greater autonomy from Madrid, slammed ETA as "vermin."

"They want to dynamite democracy. They are assassins, vermin. They are not Basques," Ibarretxe said at his headquarters in the Basque regional capital of Vitoria in northern Spain.

ETA has waged a three-decade violent campaign for independence that has killed more than 850 people. Recent attacks have included a string of explosions targeting Spanish resorts in summertime.

The explosions come only three days ahead of the election, when 34.5 million voters are expected to decide whether to keep ruling conservatives in power or hand a win to opposition Socialists.

Government spokesperson Eduardo Zaplana condemned what he called "an attack on Spanish democracy" and dubbed ETA a "criminal gang of killers."

Spanish officials said late in February that police had averted a bomb attack by ETA planned for the election campaign period.

All political parties said they had suspended their meetings for the day, and communist candidate Izquierda Unida Gaspar Llamazares also denounced what he termed "the Nazi savagery of ETA."

The two suburban stations where the blasts occurred were Santa Eugenia and El Pozo, both to the southeast of the city, firefighters said. *AFP*

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New PM returns to Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE—US Marines believe they killed two gunmen in a firefight outside the office that will house newly appointed prime minister Gerard Latortue, who returned to violence-torn Haiti Wednesday.

It was not clear whether outgoing prime minister Yvon Neptune was in the Port-au-Prince building at the time of the gunfight, one of several that Marines waged in the volatile capital overnight.

Latortue meanwhile called for "a great government of national consensus that will summon Haitians on the basis of competence, integrity and democratic commitment."

"Dictatorial inclinations in Haiti must cease," he told an airport press conference on his return from Miami.

"The security problem is out of hand. Disarmament is imperative," said Latortue, 69, who was briefly Haiti's foreign minister in 1988 and was for years the highest-ranking Haitian official at the United Nations.

He referred to himself as a "man of compromise and unification," and said he wanted to expunge the words "*chimere*," "*duvalieriste*" and "*macoute*" from the Haitian vocabulary.

The *chimeres* are the armed partisans of former president Jean Bertrand Aristide. The *duvalieristes* were partisans of former dictators Francois Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude. The *tonton macoutes* were the Duvaliers' heavy handed enforcers.

"It is my wish that the foreign troops remain in the country as short a time as possible," said Latortue. "But, unfortunately, our police lack training and I am counting on the collaboration of the foreigners to depoliticize them and make them more professional."

Marine Col. Mark Gurganus, who heads the 2,500-strong multinational force in Haiti, said Marines came under fire on two occasions near the prime minister's office and at the city's main port, returning fire in all three instances.

Marines who returned fire believed they killed two gunmen, although they found no bodies on the roof, said the colonel.

Marines guarding the main port, the scene of earlier looting, also came under fire from the occupants of a car, who fled on foot when the troops returned fire, Gurganus said.

US troops have killed two Haitians in recent days. One was shooting at the presidential palace and another failed to stop at a military roadblock, according to the military.

Diplomats said they hoped the political process underway would help stabilize the country after Aristide resigned as president and fled into exile on Feb. 29 under pressure of a month-long armed uprising.

The process was expected to gain momentum with the return of Latortue, named prime minister by a council of "wisemen" formed under a plan approved by the United States, France and the Organization of American States. *AFP*

Targeted killings rise in Iraq

HILLA, Iraq—Targeted assassinations are on the increase in Iraq, where three civilians—including two US nationals—were shot dead by killers dressed in police uniforms, and the leader of a Sunni Muslim mosque was shot dead by unidentified gunmen.

Authorities were investigating whether genuine police or attackers in disguise killed the American man and woman from the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and their translator late Tuesday.

"It was an assassination job, they did not take anything from the car even though it contained weapons and money," said Keis Hamser Abud, police chief in this town 100 km southwest of Baghdad where the three were killed. "The car had been heavily hit with gun fire from all directions."

Six men, most of them armed and wearing uniforms, were later detained and handed to US-led coalition forces. "The weapons they had on them were the same as were used in the attack, Kalashnikovs, AK-47s and pistols," Abud said.

In western Baghdad, the leader of a Sunni Muslim mosque was shot dead in the street from a vehicle by unidentified gunmen, US Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said Wednesday.

Ali Hussein Hassan al-Obedi, the imam of the Findi al-Kobaysi mosque, was gunned down by four men in a brown BMW vehicle on Monday, Kimmitt told reporters.

Kimmitt also said that four Iraqi police were killed and two wounded in a gun battle with a mob of about 50 people in Nassariyah, 375 km southeast of Baghdad. Nine Iraqis were arrested, he said.

Last week assailants in Baghdad shot dead an Iraqi translator working for Voice of America public radio and his mother and daughter, a VOA spokesperson said Wednesday in Washington.

The translator was attacked while driving home late Friday. "We have no explanation, we don't know why he was killed," the VOA said. *AFP*

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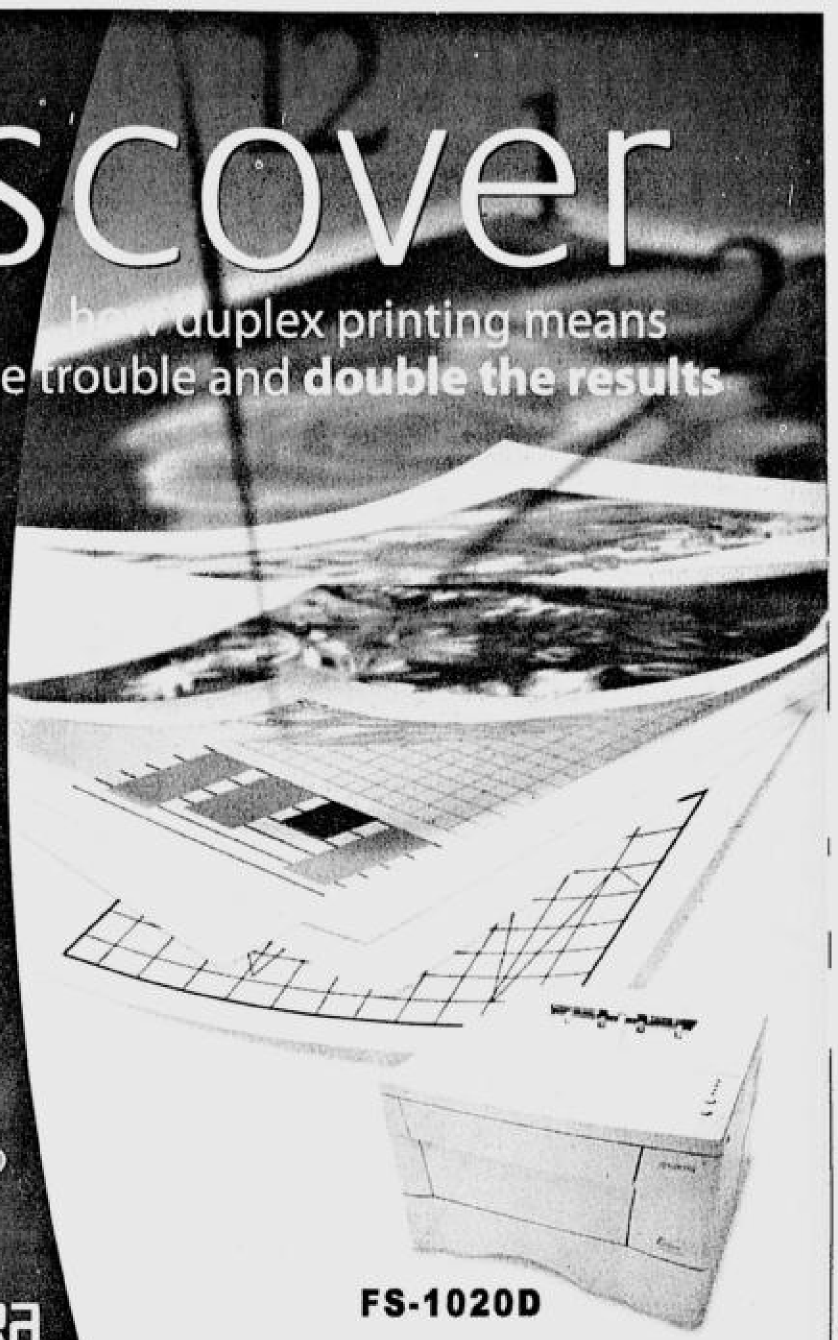
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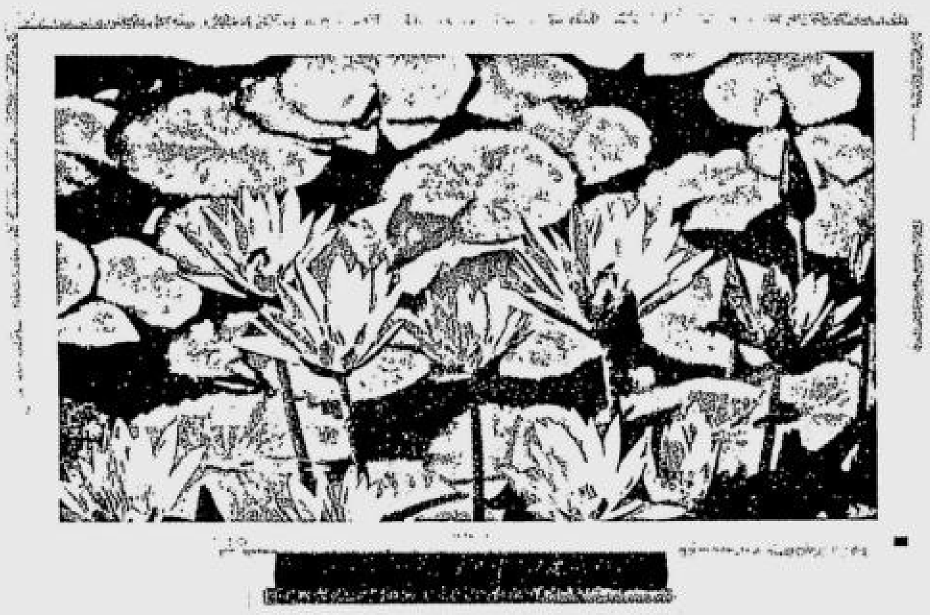

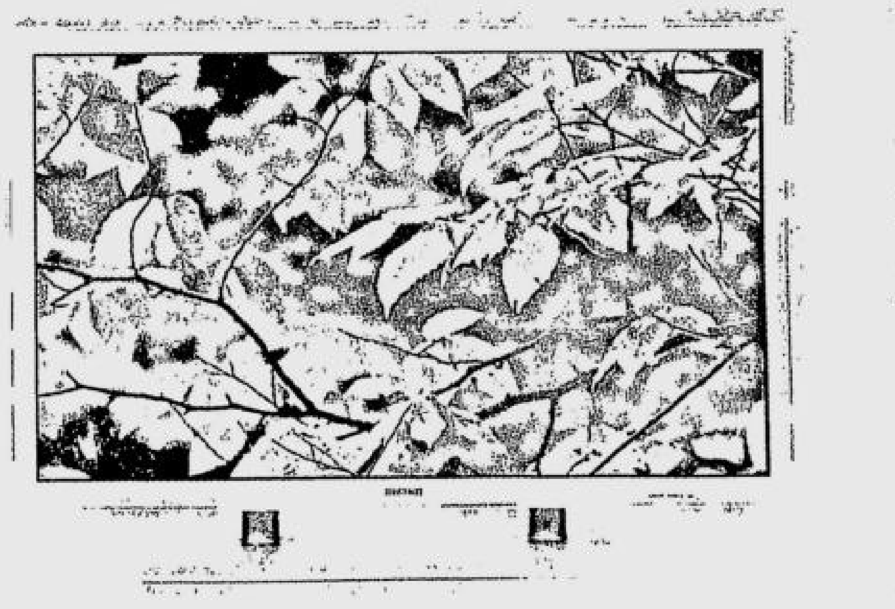

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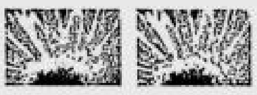

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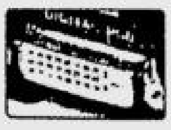

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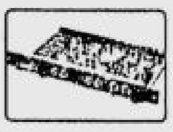

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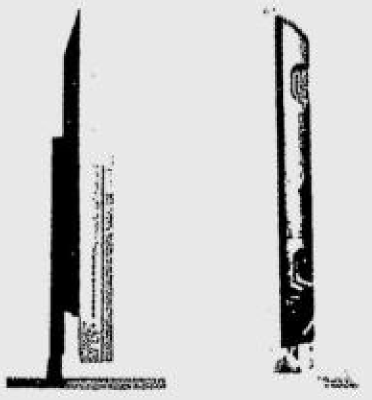

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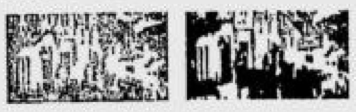

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Roh impeachment sealed, say opposition parties

SEOUL—South Korea's two main opposition parties said they would oust President Roh Moo-hyun Thursday in an impeachment showdown that threatened to cripple a government grappling with an economic downturn and North Korea's nuclear threat.

Earlier Thursday Roh refused to meet opposition demands for an apology over illegal electioneering that triggered impeachment proceedings.

The opposition Grand National Party (GNP) and the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) said they had enough support in the 271-seat National Assembly to surpass the required two-thirds majority, or 181 votes, needed to impeach.

"The fate of President Roh has been sealed," GNP Floor Leader Hong Sa-Duk said.

But a plenary session of the National Assembly scheduled for 2 p.m. has still not begun two hours later as more than 40 members of the progressive Uri Party, loyal to reformer Roh, surrounded the assembly podium and occupied the speaker's chair.

"We will physically block this vote," said a Uri Party member.

National Assembly speaker Park Kwan-Yong said he would call in police to forcible remove the Uri party lawmakers.

Opposition lawmakers who control parliament have vowed to oust Roh for violating his electoral neutrality after he called for a big turnout in favor of the pro-government Uri Party at April 15 general elections here. Their determination hardened after Roh failed to apologize during a press conference earlier Thursday.

Roh was reprimanded last week by the National Election Commission, which took no further action, judging the violation to be minor.

If impeached, Roh, 57, would be suspended immediately from office and Prime Minister Goh Kun would take over as interim president. The Constitutional Court would have to rule within six months on whether to uphold the impeachment.

Roh said at the press conference that he would not cave in to political pressure by apologizing.

The conservative GNP, which controls parliament with 145 seats, hinted Wednesday that if Roh apologized at his press conference, it could withdraw support from the impeachment process, effectively killing the motion. The MDP has only 62 seats.

But instead, Roh slammed the opposition for using impeachment as a cynical weapon to attack him and his loyalists in the Uri Party ahead of the elections.

"The opposition is abusing this case to attack me," he said. "The opposition should not use it for its political maneuvering."

Angry opposition officials said Roh's defiance had united the opposition against him and strengthened the impeachment drive.

"His speech clearly showed why he must be impeached," said MDP deputy spokesperson Jang Jeon-Hyung. "The number of lawmakers backing the impeachment motion has now reached 190."

Roh said that while he respected the NEC ruling which bans public officials from campaigning, he believed that as a politician he had the right to canvass for support.

"The election commission's decision must be respected but I cannot accept it," he said. "A president is a politician who makes political remarks. I am required to make political remarks."

Most South Koreans are opposed to impeachment but also wanted Roh to apologize for his illegal electioneering, according to opinion polls.

Analysts say that the GNP and the MDP, worried by falling support and the rising popularity of the pro-Roh Uri Party, are using impeachment to boost their election chances.

"Basically these two parties were in trouble," said politics professor Lee Chung-Hee. "The GNP and the MDP are switching the public focus from their own problems with this attack on Roh and his allies ahead of the elections."

Reformist Roh has been at loggerheads with the opposition camp in parliament which has frustrated his program at every turn since he took office 13 months ago.

His support ratings have slipped to under 30 percent amid a widening campaign finance scandal that has tainted all political parties.

AFP

ROH expressing regret. REUTERS

Pork from farm of suspected killer may have human remains

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Human DNA may have been in meat processed for human consumption at a pig farm that has been the focus of Canada's worst serial killing case, police and British Columbia's provincial health officer said.

"We can't rule out the possibility of cross-contamination," Dr. Perry Kendall said Wednesday in an interview with The Canadian Press.

When asked if cross-contamination meant human remains found their way into meat processed at the farm, Kendall said: "It's very disturbing to think about, but (there is) the possibility of some cross-contamination. But the degree of it or when or how much we really don't know."

"I think if we could rule it out, we definitely would like to," he added.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police investigators have found the remains of 22 women at the suburban farm owned by Robert William Pickton, 54, who has been charged with 15 counts of first-degree murder in the disappearances of women over the past 20 years. Police said earlier this year they expected additional charges against Pickton.

Many of the victims vanished from Vancouver's drug-infested downtown east side. In all, 31 women have been confirmed dead in the case.

Police Cpl. Cate Galliford, spokesperson for the joint law enforcement task force into the missing women case, refused to use the word remains when speaking of the potentially contaminated meat.

Instead, she said the meat may have been contaminated with human DNA.

Kendall has asked anyone who may still have frozen pork products from Pickton's farm to return those products to police.

A news release issued by British Columbia's health ministry said RCMP investigators have evidence that some products were handed out by Pickton to friends and acquaintances in the area prior to his arrest in February 2002.

"The alert is focused on these individuals," the statement said.

Lynn Frey, who was told earlier this year that her daughter Marnie's DNA had been found at the farm, was appalled.

AP

Internet firms sue hundreds sending 'spam'

WASHINGTON—Setting aside their rivalries to fight unwanted e-mail choking cyberspace, leading Internet companies announced they have sued hundreds of people suspected of sending unsolicited junk messages known as spam.

The legal actions by Microsoft Corp., America Online Inc., Earthlink Inc. and Yahoo! Inc., represent the first major industry actions under the federal "can spam" legislation that went into effect Jan. 1. The suits, which are aimed at shutting down the spammers, were filed Wednesday in federal courts in California, Georgia, Virginia and Washington state.

Dozens of those named were identified only as "John Doe" defendants accused of e-mailing unwanted pitches for prescription drugs, herbal potions and weight loss plans. Lawyers expressed confidence they can work through the courts, using subpoenas and other investigative tools, to identify and find them.

"We've been doing this a long time, and we know what we're doing. We're only a couple subpoenas away from standing at someone's door and handing them a summons," said Les Seagraves, the assistant general counsel at Earthlink, which named 75 "John Doe" defendants in its lawsuits.

The recording industry has been remarkably successful in identifying Internet users in copyright infringement lawsuits, in most cases tracing a subscriber's unique Internet address.

But spammers are famously skillful at covering their tracks, often routing unwanted e-mail through hacked or unprotected computers overseas and working under aliases and shell companies, complicating efforts to trace and identify them.

AP

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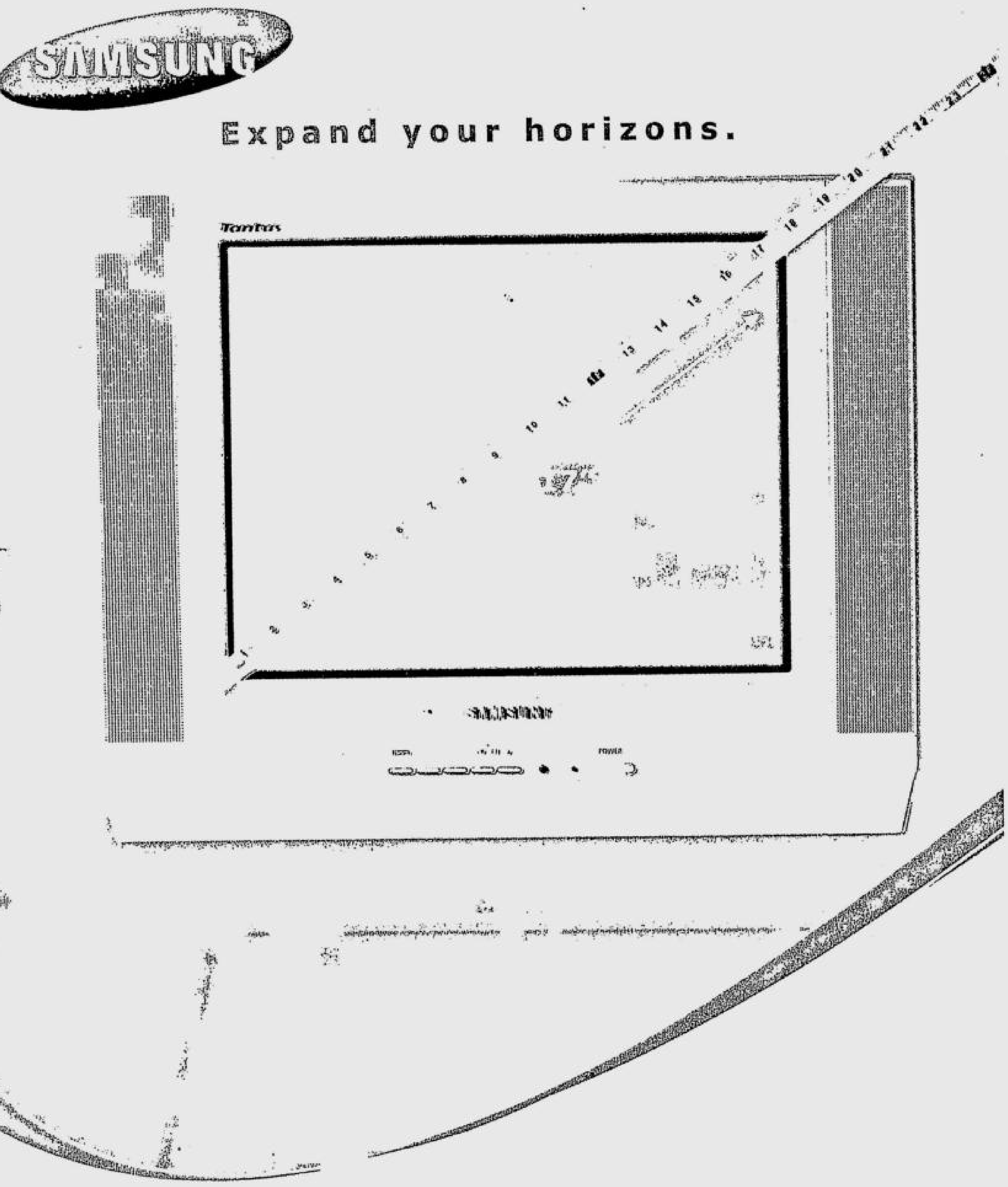

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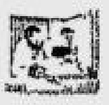
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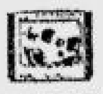
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UK frees all Guantanamo inmates sent home

LONDON—British police have freed all five Britons flown home from Guantanamo Bay prison camp and the former terror suspects began denouncing their US captors on Thursday amid questions about why they were held for two years.

The United States turned over the five detainees to British custody on Tuesday, and by late Wednesday British police and prosecutors decided to release all of them without charge.

This could cause trouble for Prime Minister Tony Blair, who will face public dismay as to why it took so long for Washington's closest ally to win its citizens' freedom if authorities at home concluded they should not face trial.

One of the five freed men was released on Tuesday and the other four on Wednesday, while a further four Britons remain at the Guantanamo prison in Cuba. Washington says they are more dangerous than the five it decided to send home.

Greg Powell, lawyer for one of the freed men, said 21-year-old Rhuhel Ahmed was on his way to a reunion with his family early on Thursday after being released just before midnight. He was one of three prisoners from Tipton, a small industrial town in central England.

"He's on his way to meet his family and obviously that's a tremendous moment for all of them, because they haven't seen each other since 2001," Powell said.

Powell said he had met his client at the London jail where he was released and found him in good health. But his treatment at the hands of the Americans had amounted to "torture."

"What I have learned from him is Guantanamo Bay is a kind of experiment in interrogation techniques and methods, really. And they do have extremely interesting stories to tel about what went on there," Powell said.

He declined to give furtherdetails about the prisoners' treatment, or explain what his client was doing in Afghanistan when he was arrested.

Powell said Ahmed's family wanted privacy. But the former prisoners will be at the center of a media frenzy —which could prove a money-spinner if they opt to sell their stories.

None of the five appearedin public immediately.

Britain's most famous publicist, Max Clifford, whose client list ranges from top nobility to O.J. Simpson, said he had been hired by the family of former detainee Terek Dergoul, 24, and expected tabloids would bid six figures for prisoners' stories.

Jamal al Harith, 35, from the northern city of Manchester was the first to go free shortly after the group landed at a British air base on Tuesday *Reuters*

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WorldBriefs

Israelis kill 5 militants

JENIN, West Bank—Israeli undercover agents killed five Palestinian militants here Wednesday, casting a shadow over hopes for a peace breakthrough in the Middle East raised by a flurry of diplomatic activity. Palestinian medical and security sources said the members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, an armed offshoot of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, were killed in the flash point West Bank town when their vehicle was intercepted. An Israeli military source said troops had acted on information that the five were on their way to carry out an attack at a nearby Jewish settlement. A Palestinian teenager was also shot dead late Wednesday when Israeli troops opened fire on stone-throwers in a refugee camp in the southern West Bank, medics said. *AFP*

$5B in Iraq contacts

WASHINGTON—The United States contracted US and British companies Wednesday to help manage $5 billion in Iraq reconstruction contracts, to be awarded soon after a bidding process plagued by delay and controversy. The Pentagon awarded seven contracts worth more than $120 million to support Coalition Provisional Authority offices that will manage the reconstruction projections in six sectors. The sectors include electricity, public works, security and justice, transportation and communication, health and education, and oil. Pentagon officials said 10 more prime construction contracts will soon follow worth up to $5 billion. *AFP*

'Don't execute maids'

SINGAPORE—Indonesian officials on Thursday appealed to Singapore not to give death sentences to five maids from Indonesia facing murder or manslaughter charges, saying the women were likely abused by their employers. Cases of abuse against Indonesian maids are widespread in the city-state—with at least five maids a day complaining to the embassy that they are mistreated or not paid, Indonesian Embassy spokesperson Chalief Akbar said. Singapore's foreign affairs ministry said they could not immediately comment on Indonesia's request. Singapore employs about 140,000 foreign maids. About 80,000 come from the Philippines and 50,000 come from Indonesia. The rest are from Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand. *AP*

PM's nephew convicted

PHNOM PENH—Prime Minister Hun Sen's nephew was found guilty Thursday of unintentional murder for fatally shooting two people following a car race on the streets of the Cambodian capital last October, a judge said. Nim Sophea, 22, was accused of firing an assault rifle wildly at passers-by last October in Phnom Penh, killing two people and injuring two others. Nim Sophea had been charged with murder, but Judge Tan Senarong convicted him of the lesser charge of unintentional murder and sentenced him to three years in prison. *AP*

Bashir may be tried anew

JAKARTA—Militant cleric Abu Bakar Bashir may be tried again if new evidence emerges linking him to terror attacks, an Indonesian official said Thursday. "If there's new evidence, whether from inside or outside (Indonesia), he will be charged again," said Harsanto, a secretary to security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The Supreme Court on Tuesday announced that it had halved a three-year jail sentence on Bashir for immigration offenses and document forgery. *AFP*

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Mercy unbecoming

EDITORIAL

THE HOUSE arrest of former President Joseph Estrada has understandably raised a ruckus in an election year where the leading presidential candidates, such as President Macapagal-Arroyo and opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr., are struggling under the long shadow cast by the Edsa II revolution that toppled Estrada.

Since Poe has not disabused the minds of the public that he is running to uphold the Estrada legacy and rehabilitate the deposed president, the issue has become a millstone around the neck of Ms Macapagal, who does not need the controversy at this crucial campaign phase.

Ah, but because she needs swing votes from the Estrada legions to pull away from Poe with whom she shares a statistical dead heat, according to surveys, the President must be extra nice these days to her disgraced predecessor. Hence, she justified the house arrest as an "act of respect" for the former leader.

There are some things troubling about this. One is the presidential authority to put Estrada under house arrest. While she explained the arrangement as "within the law," she said in the same vein that she did not have any authority on the matter "because the prosecution is the Ombudsman, and the Sandiganbayan (which are) independent of me. And the custodians are the police, and they get their own permission."

If, indeed, she were acting within the bounds of law, by what authority was she giving Estrada the license to relocate to his vacation estate just across his prison house in Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal? And how could she make it appear that Estrada's custodians are outside the pale of her authority? To be sure, the President has control of Estrada's custodians so she may have to explain why she has taken it upon herself to dictate what sort of prison to put the former president in, the Spartan barracks or a leisure estate.

Another troubling thing here is that Estrada has been given the license to enjoy his estate without the permission of the Sandiganbayan, whose authority he does not recognize. In effect, the President's apparent defense of her action not only pulls the rug from under the court, but also abets the former president's arrogant defiance of the rule of law.

The third troubling thing here is the concept of house arrest, which is not in our statutes and jurisprudence. What law are the President and her officials invoking when they justify the arrangement? If we are to follow the legal maxim that what the law does not include, it necessarily excludes, then nothing in our Constitution and our system can justify a house arrest. Since it is excluded, therefore it is not allowed.

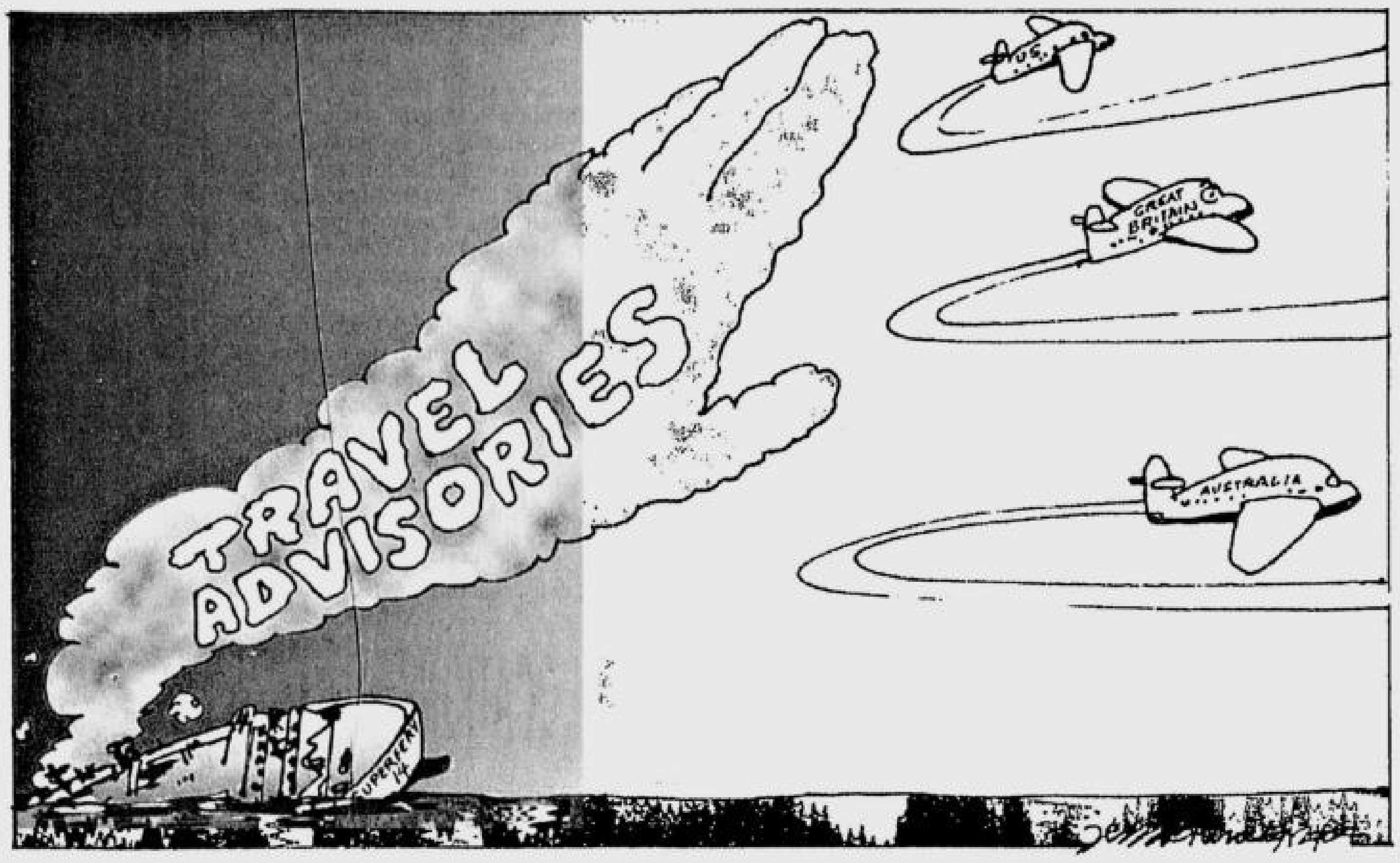
It is true that law and legality cannot satisfy the requisites of mercy and, as the President has said, of respect for a former leader. But we must presume that since we are a government of law, then the law can deliver mercy, compassion and respect to both sides of the legal divide, including the side that is in provisional prison. This presumption is a necessary fiction of a republican constitutional system.

Therefore, there is nothing inhuman or disrespectful when a former president is imprisoned in a military camp where the conditions obtaining are, by all indications, hardly those that obtain elsewhere—in the cramped New Bilibid Prisons, in the dark and dingy Manila City Jail (which Hollywood actress Claire Danes found shocking because she found there, while filming a movie about Thai prisons, a sole and solitary cockroach), and in the terrific and terrible hovels of our slums.

But Estrada's supporters insist that he should be accorded the respect fitting of a former leader. We have news for them: Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, two former South Korean presidents, were led to the court in handcuffs when they were accused of corruption after their terms of office. Nobody complained that the handcuffs were a sign of disrespect.

Nevertheless, Chun and Roh were treated with respect and mercy—later, after they were found guilty of amassing hundreds of millions of dollars in ill-gotten wealth and sentenced to prison. They did a portion of their time in prison and got clemency from their successors. They were treated with compassion after they satisfied the minimum requirements of justice.

The lesson here is obvious: justice first, mercy later.



More water for Metro Manila by year 2006?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I HAVE good news and bad news about Metro Manila's water supply.

First, the good news: The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has approved the applications of a private contractor, San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders and Developers Group (SLRBDG), and of the government's own Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) to tap Wawa Dam in Montalban to add to Metro Manila's water supply. I have written about this in a number of columns in the last several years.

Now, the bad news: Consumers won't get that water until year 2006 at the earliest. And only if there are no hitches. Therefore, we still face water shortages this summer and next. Therefore, we have to conserve the available water that we have.

Ramon Alikpala, executive director of the NWRB, explained to me last Wednesday why it took so long—11 years, yes, 11 years—to approve the applications. Environment Secretary Bibeth Gozun, chair of the NWRB, had earlier e-mailed a statement that the board had already approved SLRBDG's application.

Alikpala, who took over as executive director only a few months ago, admitted that 11 years is indeed unusually long—too long, in fact—but the reason was that during all that time, SLRBDG did not submit a feasibility study. The "foot-high" documents it submitted, he said, were letters and pre-feasibility studies made by "well known and reputable foreign consultants" but not the feasibility study the NWRB was asking for. How can we judge the merits of the application if there is no feasibility study? he asked.

Oscar Violago of SLRBDG insisted on securing approval first before submitting a feasibility study because that is what the National Water Code provides—which is defective because of that, said Alikpala. And because a feasibility study will cost several millions of pesos, which would be wasted if the application is not approved.

Violago has no definite and detailed plans. "When we ask him about his plans, he answers '*Ako ang bahala doon,*'" Alikpala said. "When we asked him how much he would charge for the water, he said P20 because he heard that that would be the per unit cost of water from a desalination plant. He was picking figures out of thin air."

Incidentally, do you know that the water the MWSS is supplying Maynilad and Manila Water is free? That is why the two water concessionaires are not trying hard to reduce the so-called "non revenue water," water that is lost through leaks or stolen through illegal connections. Do you know that 70 percent of the water supplied by the MWSS to Maynilad is lost? Non-revenue water of Manila Water is less, but it is still more than half: 54 percent. But since the water is free, it is no loss to the concessionaires. So they are not much interested in fixing leaks and going after illegal connections.

(By the way, the Lopezes are already out of Maynilad. The MWSS has already taken over it, Alikpala revealed.)

Actually, there would be no water shortage if only there weren't so much water lost, he said.

Back to Violago. The NWRB has approved his application and gave him one year to submit a feasibility study. If he doesn't submit the study within one year, the permit would be revoked. The MWSS, meanwhile, has already hired a foreign consultant to make its feasibility study, Alikpala said.

There is more than enough water in Wawa Dam for the two of them, he added. It is not yet known whether they would lay down one set or two separate sets of pipes from Wawa to wherever they want to bring the water.

Actually, Angat Dam is still sufficient for the water supply of Metro Manila (and for Bulacan irrigation and power generation) if there is enough rainfall. And even when there's not enough rain, the water supply would still be sufficient if the consumers would only conserve water.

Alikpala said that water consumption of a family in Forbes Park and other exclusive villages are many times that of the average Filipino household. That is because they have swimming pools, they water very big lawns and gardens and take baths in bathtubs, and they can afford to pay their water bills. But that is unfair to those who dutifully conserve water.

And the population of Metro Manila is growing too fast, hence the demand for water may be outgrowing the supply. The Umiray tunnel is already supplying Angat Dam with water full blast. When that is not enough, there is Laguna Lake. After that, there is Taal Lake and Caliraya Lake. Construction of the giant Laiban Dam which will harness the waters of several rivers in Quezon has ground to a halt because of lack of funds. But it has to be resumed some time soon because we are running out of water sources. After Laiban Dam, there isn't anymore.

Of course, we are surrounded by seas which have unlimited water, although salty. But desalination plants are expensive and so desalinated water is expensive. But new technology is making that cheaper.

Water is becoming a rare commodity in many parts of the world and experts believe that water rights would be the cause of so much strife and even wars in the future. Inland and desert nations would be the hardest hit.

We are blessed that we have plenty of rainfall and are surrounded by seas. We should count our blessings and preserve them.

Worth dying for

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SANDRA Burton, who died a couple of weeks ago, popularized a quote from Ninoy Aquino: "The Filipino is worth dying for." That was the main blurb from her book, "Impossible Dream," chronicling the events that led to Marcos' downfall. The phrase was apparently uttered by Aquino when he was asked if he wasn't afraid of the perils of coming home. If death awaited him, he said, so be it. The Filipino was worth dying for.

It's not a bad idea. Indeed, it is a noble one that rings especially loudly these days when all you hear are complaints about the Filipino being hopeless, being an embarrassment, never being able to learn his lessons. As witness in particular his adulation for another movie star who wants to become president, the bosom buddy of the one who did become president and drove his country mad.

At the time Aquino said what he did, pretty much the same things were being said about the Filipino. Not least by Aquino himself a decade earlier. The country, he said, was populated by one despot and 65 million cowards. Of course, a desire to be around when Marcos fell might also have oiled his noble words, but that's another story. He did face up to the consequences of his decision, lifting the phrase that escaped from his lips, along with him, to immortality.

The phrase rings even more loudly these days when a fifth of the population (probably more now) seems to have given up on the country and wants to leave it. Aquino's words did not just have to do with dying, it had to do with returning. After years of exile chafing at the leash, he was coming home. The ways things are these days, never mind the dying, just mind the coming home. Never mind saying the Filipino is worth dying for, just say the Philippines is worth returning to.

Two things, however, prevent me from embracing the concept of the Filipino being worth dying for with both arms.

The first is that it captures the worst of the Filipino as much as the best of him. The best lies in his truly heroic capacity to rise up and defy tyranny, as shown in the two Edsas. There can be no more powerful image from the first Edsa than the phalanx of nuns and housewives, merchants and factory hands, standing up to the rumbling tanks, armed only with rosary beads.

The problem is that it takes such a long time doing. I've talked about this in the past, and called it the "last two minutes syndrome." The good news is that we amaze even ourselves in trying to win the game in the last two minutes. The bad news is that we play so horribly the rest of the 46 minutes. The good news is that we rise to stop unbearable oppression, the bad news is that we allow oppression to become unbearable before we do.

Jose Rizal glimpsed it during his time, writing in "The Philippines: A Century Hence" that nothing drives the Filipino to greater fury than an affront to his *amor propio*. The Filipino, he said, is patient, like the carabao, enduring abuse after abuse silently, as he did during the entire Spanish rule. But when blow turns into insult, when the debasement of his body becomes the debasement of his soul, he rises wrathfully and nothing can stop him—as he would, Rizal warned, if the Spaniards did not change their ways. The good news is that we do not allow others to kick us while we're on the ground, the bad news is that we cringe and take in the blows before that.

Maybe it's time we stopped saying the Filipino is worth dying for and started saying the Filipino is worth living for.

The second thing that prevents me from embracing the concept wholeheartedly is that it presumes a savior offering his life to pluck the Filipino out of his misery. It presumes the Filipino to be passive, submissive and helpless. I grant he can be that too. But the Filipino doesn't really need a savior to save him. He has proven time and again that given the opportunity and a little help from his friends, he can save himself. Indeed he has proven on many occasions he can do it under the greatest adversity.

The Filipino talent for ingenuity and creativity has flowered under the greatest adversity, like a flower pushing out from under the rubble. There's no better proof of it than the barong Tagalog, a source of humiliation that the Filipino transformed into a source of pride. The barong was forced on him by his American ruler to prevent him from hiding weapons underneath it—it was transparent. But he eventually turned it into the national attire, now to be worn with pride in dignified occasions. Talk of grace under pressure. The Filipino hasn't just shown a capacity to survive, he has shown a brilliance for surviving artfully.

I remember again Sixto Roxas' and Julio Labayen's talk at the Club Filipino last Friday, where they made a pitch about the people being the means and ends of development. We tend to see the people only as the end of things and not the means of things when everywhere the people's initiative and creativity and innovativeness are in evidence. In invention, in articulation, in finding new ways to do things—the festiveness of the two Edsas shows so. Of course, his talent for finding ways to cut corners, get around the law, and make *palusot* is also everywhere in evidence, but that's another story.

The point is clear: The business of leaders is not to save the people, which they don't do anyway, it is to help the people save themselves. The business of leaders is not to die for the people, which they do even less anyway, it is to help the people live. The business of leaders is not to tell the people what to do, which they like doing all the time, it is to heed what the people want.

Maybe it's time we stopped saying the Filipino is worth dying for. Maybe it's time we started saying the Filipino is worth listening to.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Back to economics

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE ECONOMY was back on the radar screen of the 2004 presidential campaign this week, with elaborations by Raul Roco and Fernando Poe Jr. on their economic programs. The renewed focus on the economy is most welcome after public attention was distracted by the question of Poe's citizenship and the house arrest of former President Joseph Estrada in his rest house in Tanay, Rizal.

Estrada's house arrest is a non-issue. It is a waste of time to be exercised by the arrangements over Estrada's detention. There is no danger that the plunder case against him will be quashed during this campaign. The case is likely to go ahead until May 10 and to be concluded after that, whoever is elected president. There is no indication that government prosecutors will ask for the dismissal of the case. The election is so tight that any presidential intervention to get Estrada off the hook is certainly going to be self-defeating. It will antagonize the Edsa II crowd, whose vote President Macapagal-Arroyo can ill-afford to lose.

To understand better the leniency of the President toward Poe, let us not forget two important considerations. The first is that she is playing for the sympathy of Estrada's constituency in the poorer class to take their votes away from Poe who claims to be the heir to Estrada's pro-poor mantle. The second is that Ms Macapagal is ardently courting the vote of the Iglesia ni Cristo, which has been lobbying for house arrest since Estrada was charged with plunder.

The President has been leaning over backward to make life easy for Estrada while he undergoes trial. One evidence of this is that she has been clearing the way for Estrada to get medical treatment in the United States. Such leniency, which is being exercised without blocking the progress of the case, appears to be paying political dividends. Estrada has become less scathing in his criticism.

The thawing of their animosity toward each other has raised questions as to whether they had struck a deal the could lead to his acquittal. I don't think we should be too much concerned about "deals" at this time. This is not the time to ask whether the judicial process will take its course. The proper time will come when the Sandiganbayan makes its decision after the election.

What should be asked is whether the President's leniency toward Estrada has jeopardized the government's case. Clearly there is a taint of political expediency in this policy, which the President justifies as just being "humane." Political pragmatism is the worst phrase to employ in criticizing the house arrest. The fact is that Estrada has been under house arrest since he was transferred from Camp Crame to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center. His transfer to Tanay is just another variation of house arrest.

This election—contested mainly by the President, Poe, Roco and Sen. Panfilo Lacson—should not be decided on the issue of the form of Estrada's arrest. It should be decided on the primary issue of the economy, together with the equally important issue of competence and experience and preparation for running government. So, when the focus shifted back to the economy, it highlighted again the importance of competence in economic management.

This week, Poe and Roco spelled out their economic platforms before the Makati Business Club and at the University of the Philippines. Poe gave a more detailed presentation of his economic platform, first unveiled two weeks ago, in response to insistent demand that he give the voters a clearer idea of his economic vision and plans. Of the two, Roco was more focused and gave a clearer idea of what he wants. Roco was specific in proposing cuts in corporate tax. To compensate for lower revenue returns, Roco seeks a more effective tax collection, value added tax on text messages and indexation of excise taxes. The proposal to cut corporate tax echoes a Reaganite formula based on the premise that business tax breaks would translate into investments to expand the economy. This formula did not work out as designed. The US economy had the longest run of prosperity since the Vietnam War during President Bill Clinton's two terms that saw a more assertive government intervention in the economy than Reagan's. Roco's proposal was music to the ears of the Makati Business Club, which applauded it. But he should be aware that corporate tax cuts are not the answer to shrinking fiscal deficits. But while Roco's proposals are contradictory, at least the business community is clear about what he wants.

That was not the case for Poe. He did not explain his program. Rather his proxies explained it: his media manager Rodolfo Reyes and spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero. Reyes presented a booklet that summarized the platform unveiled two weeks ago. One point contained in the booklet alarmed the business community: the proposal to "look into the possibility of restructuring our sovereign debt in the domestic and international financial markets."

Debt "restructuring" is a dirty word in the financial market. It evokes images of debt relief and debt repudiation. The proposal prompted Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura to ask the Poe camp to make a clarification, saying that debt restructuring was sending the wrong signals and might be misconstrued as debit repudiation.

In the effort to show it has a plan, the Poe camp has employed some glib language without giving careful thought to what they are saying. It seems that Poe's crash tutorials are not working well. His management by proxy is not working well and his alter egos need as much tutorials as he.

The presentation raised more questions than it answered. It did not allay the businessmen's anxieties over Poe's competence. The businessmen were more nervous than reassured.

Meet 'Mother' Remmy

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

NOMINEES of Abanse! Pinay, the women's party-list group, formally submitted their certificates of candidacy the other day at the Commission on Elections.

Though they have have been going around the country talking to various groups, the women were presenting themselves collectively to the public for the first time as Abanse! Pinay's candidates.

Who are these women? Abanse! Pinay's No. 1 nominee is Remmy Ignacio Rikken. Though best known as a former executive director of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), Remmy is a stalwart of Philippine civil society, years, nay decades, before the term came into fashion. An accountant by profession, Remmy ventured into the world of social development after finishing a course at the Asian Social Institute after a period of "soul-searching" in an attempt to put more meaning in her life. She pioneered the establishment of social action programs among parishes in Mindanao, organizing farmers, where she worked with the founders of the Federation of Free Farmers, and then became active in setting up rural cooperatives. Indeed, Remmy could be said to have been "present at the creation" of the NGO community in the country. During a workshop series on the "successor generation" of NGO leaders, when Remmy was asked to talk about her experience in social development work, a participant observed that her talk was not so much on the history of Philippine NGOs as their "pre-history"!

Remmy is also known as "Mother" by a whole generation of artists and thespians at Peta, working with the likes of Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, the late Lino Brocka, Soxy Topacio, Gardy Labad and so many more! In her eight years as executive director of Peta, Remmy institutionalized the use of theater as an educational and organizing tool for communities and workplaces. It was also her years with Peta we, her friends in the women's movement, believe, that gave Remmy her theatrical flair, most evident in her entertaining and lively presentations.

* * *

AROUND 1979, Remmy took part in a conference of foundations and social development agencies (the term NGO had yet to gain currency) and, together with other women present, noted that even here, among the more "progressive" leaders, the issues of women received scant or no attention at all. In late night discussions and meetings afterwards, Remmy and three other women (Sr. Mary John Mananzan, Ging Quintos Deles and Irene Santiago) became the "founding mothers" of Pilipina, a feminist organization of which I am now national chair.

As a sister in Pilipina, I had the chance to work more closely with Remmy, sharing over long land trips or during lonely nights at various provincial conferences and workshops stories about our childhood, families, our education in feminism, story-telling sessions often interrupted by laughter and hand-slapping and bawdy jokes.

Soon after Cory Aquino assumed the presidency, Remmy was asked by close women advisers of the President to take on the work of executive director of the NCRFW. It was under Remmy's watch that the commission made the crucial move from direct organization of women (through the Balikatan movement) to mainstreaming gender concerns in governance and policy. It was a lonely struggle, little understood and even less appreciated at the start. But thanks to Remmy and the commission's many able and committed women, gender-responsive governance is today not only mainstreamed but even championed throughout the bureaucracy.

Small in stature but big on dreams and visions and highly excitable when caught up in her spiel, Remmy is a delight to watch and listen to. Her friends even play a game of counting how many sentences she can complete in the course of a talk. I look forward to seeing how she will perk up the staid halls of Congress. It will never be the same once Remmy sets foot in it!

* * *

THE SECOND nominee is Alice Morada, a lawyer and women's rights advocate based in Cebu.

Alice came late to her law career, having set aside these dreams while she raised her family. But once she got her law degree, Alice put it to good use, not just in the private sector where she is in-house counsel to a shipping firm, but also in advocacy, handling many cases pro bono for women survivors of violence.

As chair of Pilipina in Cebu, Alice has also been instrumental in the establishment of Bantay Banay, a community-based approach to violence against women that has now been adopted by communities around the country.

One of the accomplishments that Abanse! Pinay is most proud of is the passage of three landmark bills on issues of concern to women: the Solo Parents Welfare Law, the Law against Trafficking of Women and Children, and the recently-signed Law against Violence against Women and their Children. Abanse! Pinay played an important role in the drafting of these bills or in shepherding them through the legislative mill. And Alice, along with other lawyers like Katrina Legarda, Lorna Kapunan and Gettie Sandoval, were key to the conceptualization or refining of sections of these laws.

* * *

AT THE PRESS conference after the filing of their candidacy, Alice mentioned that in Cebu they are planning to put up a Center for Men with funds accessed through Abanse! Pinay. The center, she said, is meant to provide temporary shelter for men who are forced to leave their homes after a barangay order finding them guilty of abusive behavior has been issued against them, a key provision in the VAWC Law. Which just goes to show, I suppose, that Abanse! Pinay also seeks to help men, by giving them a place where they can repent and consider the error of their ways. (*The other nominees tomorrow.*)

A timely work

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

GRAMMAR was never one of my strong points in school. Fortunately, some teachers were sympathetic and allowed me to keep on writing even if I didn't know what a gerund was. I could never explain a sentence construction, punctuate correctly or put a stop on run-on sentences and dangling modifiers because I never understood what they were. The point was being able to capture thought on paper and communicate, more or less, clearly. I found it easy to correct mistakes in a given text, but being asked to justify the corrections by citing grammatical rules gave me cold sweat.

Grammar was the stumbling block to my appreciation of Pilipino and Spanish. For example, if the Instituto Cervantes fun method was in use when we were in college, maybe more Filipinos would be fluent in Spanish and now we could be paid earning double the salaries of those who use English in call centers.

Looking back on my Spanish, Latin and German classes I can still recall enduring long hours of mindless conjugation.

Thus, writing history in Filipino has always been one of my unrealized projects. It is one thing to speak Filipino, another to write in the language. Perhaps practice makes perfect, and now I have a very useful tool in the recently published "Gabay sa Editing sa Wikang Filipino (Tuon sa Pagbaybay)" published by the UP Sentro ng Wikang Filipino. Browsing through this slim volume made me realize that our language has undergone quite a lot revision and thought over the years.

Who would have known that in 1976 the Surian ng Wikang Pambansa increased the 20 letters in the Tagalog alphabet to 31 letters by adding: c, ch, f, j, ll, ñ, q, rr, v, x, and z? This expanded alphabet was then called "pinagyamang alpabeto."

Then in 1987 the 31 letters were reduced to 28 by dropping ch, ll, and rr, and it was then called "pinasimpleng alpabeto."

It would be very interesting to study the different sides in the debates on the development of the national language. The alphabet alone must have generated more than debate. Knowing how seriously some people take language—or themselves—I wouldn't be surprised if the debate later deteriorated into personal animosities, but that is material for another column.

Of course, there will be others who will disagree with this stylebook, but for the moment it is the only handy reference available. It is hoped that by sheer usage, the rules the authors have set down on written Filipino will become standard form. At least we now know when to use *din* and *rin*, *daw* and *raw*, *nang* and *ng* which are a source of so much confusion. How do we deal with numbers, foreign words, long words or words with repeating letters, syllables or plurals. What about reduplicated words that are common in our language? For example, Kataastaasan Kagalanggalang na Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (Highest and Most Respectable Association of the Sons of the People), which was abbreviated into K.K.K.N. A.N.B. and further into K.K.K. which now means either the Katipunan of the 1896 Revolution, the racist American group Ku Klux Klan or a popular Pinoy restaurant along West Avenue in Quezon City. This slim volume of rules hides all the debate and discussion that went into it.

As early as 1935, the anthropologist E. Arsenio Manuel compiled abbreviations in written Tagalog from various sources, mostly books, periodicals and newspapers. The list is now historical because many of the abbreviations are extinct but they still make interesting reading.

Today the Republic of the Philippines is simply R.P., but it used to be I.F. (for Islas Filipinas) or P.I. (Philippine Islands), which today is better known as a cuss word. There was a time when the Philippines was K.P. (Kapuluang Pilipinas) or S.P. (Sangkapuluang Pilipinas). Today Batangas is Bats. when it was formerly Bat., which made me wonder if this was confused with Bataan. Bdo. is not Banco de Oro, it used to be the abbreviation for Binondo which Manuel suggests should be Bdk. because the place name is short for Binundok.

In English, we blur the difference between a married woman (Mrs.) and a single one (Miss) by using Ms. In Tagalog we cannot switch a Ginang (Gng. Or Gg.) into a Binibini (Bb. Or Bbg.). The male form Ginoo is normally shortened into a simple G. or sometimes Gg. or rarely GG, which today can mean *galunggong* or *gago*.

Time is simple in English which follows two 12-hour cycles so that morning is a.m. and the afternoon and evening are p.m. In Tagalog we have four, more exact divisions of time: *ng umaga* or n.u. (in the morning), *ng tanghali* or n.t. (noon), *ng hapon* or n.h. (in the afternoon), *ng gabi* or n.g. (in the evening).

The Latin et cetera or etc. is rendered as ibp. (*at iba pa*) but today we use atbp.

Since the media play a great role in the development and usage of Filipino, our language both spoken and written will continue to be enriched by change. As they say, dictionaries, encyclopedias and stylebooks are actually obsolete as soon as they come off the press.

"Gabay sa Editing sa Wikang Filipino" does not have the usage and abbreviations currently in use in texts on our cell phones. That is worth another book all by itself. But then the journey of a thousand miles begins with the proverbial first step and the Sentro ng Wikang Filipino should be congratulated for a timely work well done.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Cockfights, psychics and opinion surveys

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

YESTERDAY one daily newspaper had a headline: "Psychic predicts Poe victory in May."

Psychics are totally different from public opinion firms, but I couldn't help wondering if our voters interpret public opinion surveys almost like predictions in a dream that are taken as tips for betting in a cockfight or a horse race.

The parallels between elections and gambling are all too real. Some people will bet based on "tips" interpreted from a dream or acquired from some fortuneteller. Others will wait a bit before placing their bets, observing other people first. The fighting cock that begins to get more bets is "*llamado*" while the underdog (underbird) is said to be "*dejado*."

Let me do a bit of linguistic analysis of these two Filipino words, which have mutated from their original Spanish meanings. In gambling events, such as cockfights and horse races, "*llamado*" refers to the "winnable" one although originally, the Spanish word "*llamado*" meant "the named," as in one is identified as a choice. The word is sometimes even used in the context of a vocation, meaning someone with a calling is "*llamado*." I'm speculating that the Filipino use of the term evolved from the way a "winnable" fighting cock is called out repeatedly as bets are placed.

"*Dejado*," on the other hand, means neglected or abandoned, but has now come to mean, in Filipino, the fighting cock or race horse that is not seen as having a winning chance, leading to its abandonment by bettors.

Some of you may be seeing more parallels now with psychic predictions and public opinion surveys. I feel public opinion surveys are important, but I agree with Rep. Francis Escudero, Fernando Poe Jr.'s campaign manager, when he suggested the other night on "Dong Puno Live" that survey results conducted around elections should be released only to the client, meaning the political party who pays for the survey and who wants a reliable and honest public pulse.

At present, public opinion survey results are splashed all over the front pages, sometimes mangled by mass media, and are then taken by the public almost like horse-racing tips. I've actually heard Roco and Lacson supporters, for example, saying they might end up voting for FPJ or for GMA because they don't want their vote wasted on a "*dejado*." Add on all the psychic predictions and we end up with an even stronger bandwagon effect.

This kind of rationalization exposes the very dangerous weaknesses of our democracy. First, it shows how elections have become reduced to a choice between the *llamado* and the *dejado*. I often hear people saying that Filipinos have a soft spot, that we tend to favor the underdog. This just doesn't apply to elections or to situations involving positions of great power. We all know what happens when mayors win and will then punish entire barangays who did not support him or her, by depriving them of social services, or of a much needed road or electrical connection. People with little power—in the Philippines or elsewhere—will shift to whoever's winning because this is their only survival strategy.

A second weakness exposed by our *llamado/dejado* system is our lack of clear party platforms or ideologies. Since all the candidates' rhetoric and promises are so similar, voters have no basis for making reasoned choices. No wonder they fall back on charisma, patronage relations and this *llamado/dejado* system.

Amid this depressing situation, I actually see an important role for public opinion firms in raising the levels of political literacy in our country, that is, the ability of voters to follow political issues and make informed choices.

In Western countries, public opinion firms are usually commissioned by media outlets to do the surveys, which will rate politicians simultaneously with polls on burning issues. For example, a polling firm will survey how Americans feel about Bush's performance as president and, in the same survey, they may ask, specifically, how Americans feel about Bush's handling of Iraq. This way, as we are seeing now, a drop in Bush's approval ratings can be correlated, to some extent, with the way he's been (mis)handling the war.

To capture the full context of public opinion, surveys need to ask several questions about a particular issue. An example comes with the recent controversy around same-sex marriages in the United States. A Gallup/CNN poll (CNN being the media company and Gallup a survey firm) asked Americans several questions to get as many aspects of public opinion as possible. From the statistics, we learn that while the majority of Americans still do not support same-sex marriages, they do recognize that gay men and lesbians have rights, and that civil unions—a kind of legal partnership arrangement—should be allowed so that a gay man or lesbian can be named, for example, as an insurance beneficiary by a partner, or can have inheritance rights.

That poll also showed that while Americans disapprove of same-sex marriages, they were also against Bush's move to amend the US Constitution to ban such marriages. You can see from this example that a public opinion survey can generate richer and more intelligent discussions about political and social issues by using a battery of questions, rather than just a rating of politicians.

These survey results are picked up nationwide by the mass media and become material for more stories and talk shows, giving even more rich texture to the issues. Again, in relation to the same sex marriage issue, USA Today devoted four full pages to the survey results, accompanied by their own interviews with people for and against such marriages, and feature stories on gay and lesbian couples. This way, people do not become captives of statistics.

Many of our voters today cast their ballots based on an obligation to some politician because he or she did you a favor (whether giving out a grocery bag, or passing out health insurance cards with their pictures on it). Others vote for someone they think will win anyway, the *llamado*, based on psychic predictions or public opinion surveys. What should happen (and this is a challenge that needs to be taken up by public opinion surveys and, I hope, the mass media) is to keep expanding the space for voters and politicians to exchange their views on issues and to hold the politicians accountable, in the long term, to their constituencies.

The future is not for psychics or public opinion surveys to predict; it's for us to chart and to transform into reality.

* * *

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The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

‘Crime’ against the people

IN CYNICALLY foisting Fernando Poe Jr. on the mostly uneducated emotion-driven masses, imagining that his popularity with them as a movie idol would carry him to the presidency, FPJ’s handlers are committing a “crime” against our people; and FPJ is their accomplice, though perhaps also their victim, insofar as he has yielded to their self-serving manipulations.

I am constrained to use the word “crime” in order to stress the gravity of their nationwide offense which, if it succeeds, will clearly be injurious to our people’s well-being—as clearly as it is most evident that (1) FPJ has not a whit of experience in public governance; (2) he has no platform, no program of action in government, despite his boast that he is “a man of action”; (3) he avoids debate, an exchange of views with other presidential aspirants on serious matters that bear on our people’s well-being; (4) his model and exemplar, by his own admission, is Erap *“para sa mahirap”* whose movie personality is at the root of his scandal and failure as president; (5) he is consequently merely a tool and mouthpiece of *trapos* behind his campaign.

The interview with Max Soliven on “Impact” painfully showed that FPJ, for all his projection there of sincerity and a gentle disposition, has no concrete plan, no vision, no idea of the serious responsibilities that the position he seeks entails.

When I speak of “mostly uneducated, emotion-driven masses,” I speak objectively and do not intend to slur their essential dignity and decency as individual human beings. It was obvious during the Dong Puno TV show in Marikina, featuring the issue of national surveys by the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia, that generally speaking, our masses suffer grievously from their poverty and, if they have some free schooling, from the poor quality of our educational system. They delight in emotional outbursts and partisanship, and—in that pathetic spectacle of circus entertainment—merely hoot their disagreements from sheer ignorance of the science of public surveys; and Ernesto Maceda, exemplary *trapo* in FPJ’s senatorial slate, merely panders to their *“bulusok ng damdamin”* (as one spectator put it) when he refers to “False Asia.”

FPJ’s handlers and manipulators, whatever the outcome of the May 10 elections, will have no refuge anywhere from the judgment of history.

—GEMINO H. ABAD,
Department of English
and Comparative Literature,
University of the Philippines,
Diliman, Quezon City

Mixed signals from INQ7.net

THE MARCH 4 editorials of the INQUIRER seem to lament the “sellout” by the youth who choose to go abroad and make money rather than continue to struggle here at home.

While I wholeheartedly agree with the sentiments voiced in the editorials, I have to point out a piece of irony that is perhaps one of the results of the “dictates of commerce” mentioned by the editorials. On the INQUIRER’s website, INQ7.net, the editorials are featured on the same page as a Sponsored Link inviting nurses to work in Canada. I think that sends mixed signals, don’t you?

—JOEY LAO,
antukinph@yahoo.com

Duck productivity less than 100%

THIS is to clarify some facts in a story that appeared on the Business section of the INQUIRER last March 1, 2004, titled “Duck raising is something to quack about.”

First, I would like to point out that I am not a chemical engineering graduate but an agribusiness graduate from the University of the Philippines Los Baños. Moreover, I am not earning P40 million a year as stated in the article written by Christine A. Gaylican because as with other agribusiness ventures, duck raising has its highs and lows and could not be relied upon 100 percent. In contrast to the statement in the article (“Have a flock of 55,000 ducks that hatch nearly the same number of eggs daily”), the productivity of duck layers in reality does not achieve a 100 percent rate of production.

As for my 20 years experience (since 1984) as a duck raiser, the highest production rate ever recorded in my farm was around 70-80 percent, which is very dynamic. In addition, I never claimed that my farm was the largest in Laguna or in the country for that matter, since there are still some large farms that can be found in the nation.

—LEO DATOR,
proprietor, Dator Farm,
Victoria, Laguna

I ADMIT I committed a mistake on the academic degree of Leo Dator. I apologize for that. The figures used in the story were only rough estimates and do not really pertain to the real income of Dator.

—CHRISTINE GAYLICAN,
Business reporter

Why FPJ must join a public debate

SUPPORTERS of actor-candidate Fernando Poe Jr. argue that a presidential debate is not necessary because this is just a ploy to highlight the intellectual disparity between him and his closest contender, President Macapagal-Arroyo.

While debates could indeed highlight the disparity between FPJ and the more qualified presidential contenders, FPJ’s camp must grow up and realize that presidential debates are not intended for that purpose. After all, if FPJ will take his candidacy seriously and meet the challenges it brings head-on, a debate can be his saving glory. There are about 60 to 70 percent of voters who either prefer to vote for their candidates or are undecided to vote for FPJ, precisely because he has not presented a convincing case why he ought to take the helm of the country as chief executive.

Interestingly, those who say that a presidential debate is not necessary also contend that a candidate’s “constant stand and action for the interest of the majority of the people” should be our basis in determining whether a candidate deserves our vote. Precisely. But how would we know whether a candidate has a constant stand and action if he has not taken up the task of showing, or even just manifesting, these constant stand and action?

The fact is, we do not know whether FPJ is a deserving candidate. He does not have a track record in public service. He doesn’t even have a good academic track record that could at least indicate that he has the capacity to do “on-the-job-training” if he gets elected as president. But many are bedazzled by his popularity—not surprisingly, of course.

It is the duty of all discerning citizens of this land to at least support a process which will enlighten those who may have been too star-struck to think that being the nation’s leader is not a walk in the amusement park. A call for debate should not be viewed as taking a pot shot at FPJ’s candidacy. Rather, it should be taken both as a challenge and opportunity—and even more so, an obligation to the people.

FPJ’s supporters have often praised him for his sincerity. There is nothing more sincere than to prove to the public that he is willing to learn the ropes of being the chief representative of the republic now—before many of our *kababayans’* ballots are cast. All he has to do is stop uttering motherhood statements through the media, take to the podium with other presidential candidates and elaborate on his position on pressing national issues.

—EVA ALIPARO,
csaliparo@yahoo.com

Breath of fresh air

ELECTION fever is rising in the Philippines. On May 10 Filipinos will go to the polls to elect a president and vice president, as well as senators, congressmen and local officials.

Emotions are high. The masses have all but declared a movie actor their next president. The incumbent lady President seems willing to do anything, befriend anybody, just to stay in power. Turncoats have turned yet again. The *balimbing* is back with a vengeance.

Mudslinging and name-calling are in full swing. And this is only March.

From the outside, looking in, I see the complete decay of morality, the painful absence of common decency, the disgusting lack of shame.

I study the candidates, and not one of them measures up even to the most conservative expectations.

We are in a terrible situation. It seems utterly hopeless.

I listen in on discussions on who to vote for. The arguments are empty. They echo a people who have given up hope. They describe the mentality of our impoverished nation. Many rally behind the movie icon. Others choose the “lesser evils.” My heart sinks.

And then I meet Brother Eddie Villanueva. An evangelist running for president? I can hardly believe it. His energy is faith. His code is the Bible. His platform is the renewal of the heart, the return of morals, the rejection of all instruments of corruption. Suddenly a breath of fresh air.

They say that it is darkest just before dawn. I say it can’t get darker than right now. Please, God, let it be morning soon.

—MARINELLA QUEZON,
3429 Antipolo St.,
Poblacion, Makati City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

ELECTRIC SERVICE IN THESE AREAS WILL BE MOMENTARILY INTERRUPTED FOR FACILITIES UPGRADING AND OTHER LINE WORK.

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

POSTED ONLINE AT OUR WEBSITE

MERALCO
www.meralco.com.ph

MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2004

RIZAL (TANAY)

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 3:00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS TANAY 11ZP AND 13ZP

Portion of Rizal Provincial Road from Baras boundary to Plaza Aldea including Bgy. Tandang Kutyo, Sitio Dalawang Kawayan, Tanay Poblacion, M.H. Del Pilar, P. Burgos, C. Santos, Lapu-Lapu, Lakeshore Drive, J. Catolos, A. Bonifacio, Austria, Dr. S. Antonio, A. Rodriguez Ave. and portion of Manila East Road.

REASON: Maintenance work inside Meralco-Tanay substation.

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2004

BULACAN

BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 3:00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS SAPANG PALAY 32YO AND 34YO

Along IPO Road and Quirino Highway from Meralco-Sapang Palay substation to near Francisco Homes main gate including Towerville, Bgy. Sto. Cristo, City Homes Builders, Igay Cockpit and major portion of Francisco Homes.

Portion of Road 1 from Meralco-Sapang Palay substation to near Carissa Homes Access Road including Bgys. San Pedro, Sabitang Kampana and Dulong Bayan in San Jose Del Monte.

REASON: Maintenance work inside Meralco-Sapang Palay substation.

BULACAN (MALOLOS AND PLARIDEL)

BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 5:00AM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALOLOS 33YV

Along Gov. Padilla St. from Meralco-Malolos substation to and including Cagayan Valley Road, Bgys. Santisima Trinidad, Mabini, Barihan, Sto. Niño, Agnaya and Pinagkabahan.

REASON: Line rehabilitation work along Gov. Padilla St. in Plaridel and Malolos, Bulacan.

MALABON CITY

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 1:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALABON 45YD

Along M. Aquino, N. Vicencio, Santos and Roman Sts. from near Sanciangco St. to and including P. Bautista St. and Encarnacion Court in Bgy. Niugan.

REASON: Various maintenance work along N. Vicencio St. in Bgy. Niugan, Malabon City.

CAVITE (GEN. TRIAS AND TRECE MARTIREZ)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 9:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 1:30PM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TMC-2 45WA

Portion of Governor Drive from Annex Market to and including portion of TMC-Tanza Highway in Bgy. San Agustin, Trece Martirez.

Portion of De los Reyes Road from McDonald's to and including Petron in Bgy. Biclatan, Gen. Trias.

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TMC-2 45WA

Portion of Governor Drive from Churchland to near McDonald's including TMC Municipal Hall and Walter Mart in Bgy. Manggahan, Gen. Trias.

REASON: Relocation of facilities along Governor Drive in Bgy. Manggahan, General Trias, Cavite.

CAVITE (IMUS)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 3:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT BACOOR 410WX

Along Buhay na Tubig Road from Camella Homes to and including California West Hills, Covina, Palm Groove, Cita Italia, Villa de Primarosa, Barcelona 1, 2, 3 & 4, Barcelona Annex 3, Petron, Shelter Town and Las Verandas.

REASON: Various maintenance work along Buhay na Tubig Road in Imus, Cavite.

LAGUNA (CALAMBA, LOS BAÑOS AND BAY)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 3:00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS LOS BAÑOS 32WT, 34WT AND 35WT

Portion of Los Baños-Calamba Provincial Road from near SMC-Coca-Cola Calamba Plant to Bgy. Dila in Bay including Pamplona Compound, Lake View Subd., El Danda Compound, Canossa Academy, Villa Remedios Subd., Spring Homes Subd., Pamana-Letran Homes, Letran College - Calamba, Dr. J.P. Rizal Memorial Hospital in Bgy. Bucal; Bato-Bato Spring Resort, Villa Pansol, Patio Aserado, Dilag Subd., Agua Caliente, Miramonte, Bena Retreat House, Villa Rosario, Club Solvento, Cynade, Crystal Springs, Merry Land Hot Spring Resort, Shangrila Village in Bgy. Pansol; Valley View Spring, Spingdale Garden, Bgys. Masili, Tadlak and Sucol in Calamba.

Splash Mountain, Makiling Heights, Jamaica Hills, Telanco Homes, Bureau of Plant Industry, PCARRD Compound, Carbern Village, Makiling Subd., Rodas Subd., Marymount Village, Olivarez Plaza, Uniwide, Umali Subd. in Bgys. Dampalit, Bambang, Anos and Batong Malake in Los Baños. P Portion of Lopez Ave. from Los Baños-Calamba Provincial Road to Silangan Groove including Trace Computer College, Jasland, Los Baños General Hospital, Agapita Complex and Sta. Fe Subd. in Bgy. Batong Malake, Los Baños.

Bay Development Corp., Bay View Subd., Bgys. Kabaritan, Sto. Domingo, Maitim, Puypoy, Masaya, Tranca and Dila in Bay.

REASON: Preventive maintenance and testing work inside Meralco - Los Baños substation.

TUESDAY TO WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16-17, 2004

MANILA

BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (TUE., 03/16/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 2:30AM AND 3:00AM (WED., 03/17/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TEGEN 44B

Portion of Padre Burgos St. and Bonifacio Drive from near National Museum to near Railroad St. including one-feed of Manila Hotel in South Port District

BETWEEN 11:00PM (TUE., 03/16/04) AND 3:00AM (WED., 03/17/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TEGEN 44B

Along Gen. Luna and Cabildo Sts. from near Padre Burgos St. to near Anda St. including Sta. Lucia, Sta. Potenciana, Victoria, Muralla, Victoria Ext., P. Burgos Sts., portion of Real St., Traders Royal Bank, Mapua Institute of Technology, The Manila Bulletin, Seamen's Hospital, Casa Marinero, Dept. of Labor & Employment, Phoenix Bldg., Concepcion Bldg., Knights of Columbus, Phil. Business for Social Progress, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, CBCP, Falcon Customs and Herald Publications in Intramuros.

REASON: Retirement of primary lines along Sta. Potenciana St. and stringing of conductors along Victoria St. in Intramuos, Manila.

LAS PIÑAS CITY

BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (TUE., 03/16/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 5:30AM AND 6:00AM (WED., 03/17/04) - PORTIONS OF CIRCUIT PAMPLONA 53XD

Portion of Aria St., Aurora Pijuan St., BF Resort Ave. and Alabang-Zapote Road from Meralco-Pamplona substation to near Paraiso Drive including porton of Gloria Diaz St., Elizabeth Seton School, Aguilar Cpd., PNB Housing, Veraville Villa Grande Classic, Imperial Royale, Caseria Mariposa Vista Grande, Venezia Homes, BF Vista Grande, Castilian Classic, Veraville Villa Grande, RGV Townhouses, Mother Earth Subd., St. Michael Subd., Camella Homes, Holy Family Cpd., Happy Village and Angela Village in Bgy. Talon Dos.

Portion of Alabang-Zapote Road from near Marcos Alvarez Ave. to near Concha Cruz Drive including Robles Handicrafts in Bgy. Almanza Uno.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (TUE., 03/16/04) AND 6:00AM (WED., 03/17/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT PAMPLONA 53XD

Along Marcos Alvarez Ave. from Alabang-Zapote Road to and including Magdiwang Subd., BASF, Golden Meadows Realty, Villa Luningning Subd., Sta. Scholastica Subd., Mikeseli Subd., Doña Leoncia Subd., Veraville Homes 3, ROH Auto Product, Veraville Townhomes I, Agro Homes Subd. I, Delnor Subd., Royal South Townhomes, Moonwalk Village, Golden Acres Subd., Soldier's Hills II Subd., Christian Ville, Greenvalley Subd., Soldier's Hills IV Subd. and Woodridge School in Bgys. Talon Cuatro and Talon Singko.

Along Rose of Heaven Drive from Alabang-Zapote Road to and including Hansuyin Village, Equitable Bank Village and Talon Village in Bgy. Talon Cuatro.

REASON: Relocation of line switch (LBS 53XD11) affected by the construction of pedestrian overpass along Alabang-Zapote Road in Bgy. Talon Cuatro, Las Piñas City.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2004

BULACAN (GUIGUINTO AND PLARIDEL)

BETWEEN 1:00AM AND 6:00AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT TABANG 34YH

Along Maharlika Highway from McArthur Highway to near North Diversion including Champaca, Gladiola, Hyacinth, Lily, Macopa, Lanzones, Rosaryville, Sta. Rita, Sto. Lorenzo, Ligaya, Tomas, Sampaguita, Ilang-Ilang Sts., Violeta Ville Annex I, Rosaryville 1 and 2, Felville Subd., St. Agatha Homes, Sta. Clara Estate, Maunlad Homes, Sta. Rita Elementary School, Masagana Subd., Hoc Po Feeds and Hydro-Pipe in Guiguinto.

Portion of McArthur Highway from Meralco-Tabang substation to Maharlika Highway including Bgy. Santor, FBIC Petroleum, Liquid Packaging corp., Fruit Asia Inc., AVA Fleming Laboratory, Ad-Drugstel Pharmaceutical Lab., Glowdel Lab., Caltex, Philko Peroxide Corp. and Sucere Foods Corp. in Plaridel.

REASON: Various maintenance work along McArthur Highway in Guiguinto and Plaridel, Bulacan.

BATANGAS

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 5:00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUITS BOLBOK 33ZV, 34ZV, 322ZV, 323ZV, 324ZV AND 325ZV MAHABANG PARANG 32WZ AND NPC-BOLBOK 32ZZ AND 33ZZ

The whole of Batangas City and San Pascual.

REASON: Preventive maintenance and testing work inside Meralco-Bolbok substation.

WEDNESDAY TO THURSDAY, MARCH 17-18, 2004

QUEZON CITY

BETWEEN 11:00PM AND 11:30PM (WED., 03/17/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 5:30AM AND 6:00AM (THU., 03/18/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SAN JUAN 41VF

Portion of N. Domingo St. from Meralco-San Juan substation to Doña M. Hemady Ave. (Pacific Ave.) including Garden View Towers 2 in Bgy. Valencia.

BETWEEN 11:00PM (WED., 03/17/04) AND 6:00AM (THU., 03/18/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SAN JUAN 41VF

Portion of Doña M. Hemady Ave. (Pacific Ave.) from N. Domingo St. to Aurora Blvd. including 1st St. in Bgy. Valencia.

Portion of Aurora Blvd. from Doña M. Hemady Ave. to Rosario Drive including Balete Drive, 3rd, 5th, 6th, New Jersey Sts. and Magnolia Pumping Station in Bgys. Valencia and Mariana.

Reason: Installation and retirement of facilities along 1st St. cor. Doña M. Hemady Ave. in Bgy. Valencia, Quezon City to serve Gilmore IT Center.

THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2004

CAVITE (CARMONA)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 9:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 1:30PM AND 2:00PM - PORTIONS OF CIRCUIT GMA 45XF

Along Governor Drive (Pala-Pala-Carmona Highway) from Pacific Activated Carbon to near Southcoast Industrial Estate in Bgy. Ulong Tubig.

Along Governor Drive from near Welbourne Industrial Subd. to near Maguyam Road in Bgy. Bancal.

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT GMA 45XF

Along Governor Drive (Pala-Pala-Carmona Highway) from Southcoast Industrial Estate to and including Welbourne Industrial Subd., Mountview Industrial Subd. Phase I, Villa Concepcion, Phillip Morris Phils., Global Lighting Phils., Pantagon Industries, Socor Construction Corp. Asphalt Batching Plant, Pacific General Steel, Seagull Chemicals, Metalcast, Induplex, Azcor Lighting Systems, Kingflex Rubber Corp., Kolora Ink & Chemical Corp., Golden Glorious Steel, Gemphil Wiring Systems, Metal City, Jack Diamond, Excel Coil Coating, Perfect Steel Craft, Kou Fu Color Printing, Exito Electronics, Ramatek Phils, Manila Luggage, Tommie Creative, Lifestyle Tableware, Grandeur Textile Mills and Best Rubber in Bgy. Bancal.

REASON: Relocation of facilities along Governor Drive in Bgy. Bancal, Carmona, Cavite.

BULACAN (BOCAUE AND BALAGTAS)

BETWEEN 10:00AM AND 11:00AM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT STA. MARIA 424YU

Portion of McArthur Highway from Bgy. Caingin to Meralco-Balagtas substation including Super Lamps, the whole of Intercity Industrial Estate in Bo. Wakas, Bocaue; Elcowood Processing, Active Woods, Tambo Agro Products, Magdalena Subd., F. L. Santos, F. Sison, S. Gabriel and P. Catro Sts. in Balagtas.

BETWEEN 10:00AM AND 2:00PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT BALAGTAS 13YA

Portion of McArthur Highway from Meralco-Balagtas substation to and including Bo. Burol, Bgys. Antipona and Biñang, Sandico, Gomez, Burgos, Zamora, A. Bonifacio, J. P. Rizal, Mabini, A. Luna and Bambang Sts., Bos. Igulot, Wakas, Sulucan and Bambang in Bocaue.

REASON: Various maintenance work inside Meralco-Balagtas substation.

THURSDAY TO FRIDAY, MARCH 18-19, 2004

VALENZUELA CITY

BETWEEN 11:30PM AND 12:00MN (THU., 03/18/04) AND THEN BETWEEN 4:00AM AND 4:30AM (FRI., 03/19/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALINTA 42YB

Portion of McArthur Highway from Meralco-Malinta substation to near Meralco-Polo substation including Hermoso, G. Santiago, Magiliw, Makisig, Blanco Sts., Lena Subd., Furama Cpd., Flexco, Atis Roads, Roads 1& 6, Puregold Bldg., Wilco Chem., Fan Guard Mfg., Extensive Wood Processing, Sky-H Lumber, Solitex Mfg., Flex Mfg., Super Grocers, Malabon Container, Aquasphere Industries and Briliant Dragon Trading in Bgys. Dalandan and Malanday.

BETWEEN 11:30PM (THU., 03/18/04) AND 4:30AM (FRI., 03/19/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALINTA 42YB

Along T. Santiago St. from near McArthur Highway to and including Dangold Subd., one-feed of Meralco-North Distribution Division, Pacheco Subd., Veinte Reales St., Skylark Plastic Industries, Phil. Umbrella Factory, Shentex Industries, JLK Industries and Standard Cereal in Bgy. Malanday.

Reason: Various maintenance work along T. Santiago St. in Bgy. Malanday, Valenzuela City.

LAGUNA (STA. ROSA)

BETWEEN 11:00PM (THU., 03/18/04) AND 5:00AM (FRI., 03/19/04) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT BALIBAGO 42XV

Portion of Felix Reyes St. from Meralco-Balibago substation to Biñan-Balibago National Highway.

Portion of Biñan-Balibago National Highway from Felix Reyes St. to Chengteh Ceramics in Bgy. Tagapo including Stanford Corp., South Supermarket, Adamson and Adamson, Calypso Resort, St. Agata Village, Rosa Subd., Sta. Rosa Love Homes, Lakeshoreville, Semper Subd., Bo. Puntod, Metrogate Subd., Florenceville Subd., Villa De Oro and Douglas-Pag Ibig Homes in Bgys. Pook, Masiit, Macabling and Tagapo.

REASON: Relocation of distribution facilities along Biñan-Balibago National Highway in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2004

PARAÑAQUE CITY

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 8:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 2:30PM AND 3:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SUN VALLEY 425WG-43WG

Portion of Edison Ave., Quirino St., Daly Road and Belevedere St. from West Service Road of South Super Highway to and including London, Liverpool, Washington, Carmelite, Mount Claire, Montevideo, Montreal, Long Beach, Jamaica, Valentino, Las Vegas, Alpine, Palm Spring, Manhattan, Roxas, Magsaysay, Garcia, Molave Sts., Main Ave., Air Transortaion Office-MIA Radar Station, South Admiral Village, Cubic Subd., Camella Homes-Nichols and Molave Park Subd. in Bgy. Merville.

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 3:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SUN VALLEY 425WG-43WG

Major portion of Merville Park Subd. including Vatican, Athens, Washington, Naples, Vienna, Tokyo, Barcelona, Florida, Madrid, Nomads, Rome, New York, Amsterdam, Munich, Hamburg, Anchorage, Copenhagen, Melbourne, Calcutta, Cairo, Florence, Toledo, Jerusalem, Iraq, Israel and Teheran Sts. in Bgy. Merville.

Reasons: 1. Various maintenance work in Merville Park Subd., Bgy. Merville, Parañaque City.
2. Load splitting of Merville Special Voltage Transformer bank.

SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2004

MAKATI CITY: AND TAGUIG CITY

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 8:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 2:30PM AND 3:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALIBAY 53VJ

Portion of Pasong Tamo Ext. from near Lumbang St. in Kayamanan "C", Makati City to Lawton Ave., Upper Bicutan, Taguig City.

Portion of Lawton Ave. from Philippine Navy Compound in Fort Bonifacio to East Service Road of South Super Highway including Philippine Marines Compound.

Portion of East Service Road of South Super Highway from Lawton Ave. to near TESDA Bldg. in Upper Bicutan, Taguig City.

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 3:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALIBAY 53VJ

Portion of Bayani Road from near Lawton Ave. to near bridge in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

REASON: Various maintenance work along Bayani Road and Lawton Ave. in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

MERALCO exerts all efforts to restore electric service as scheduled. However, there are instances when due to unavoidable circumstances, restoration may extend beyond the published schedule.

For more information, please contact our CALL CENTER at telephone number 16211, fax nos. 1622-8554, or e-mail address *callcenter.tech.assist@meralco.com.ph*. For faster resolution of inquiries, please use the *Bill ID Number or Service Identification Number (SIN)* indicated in your electric bills.

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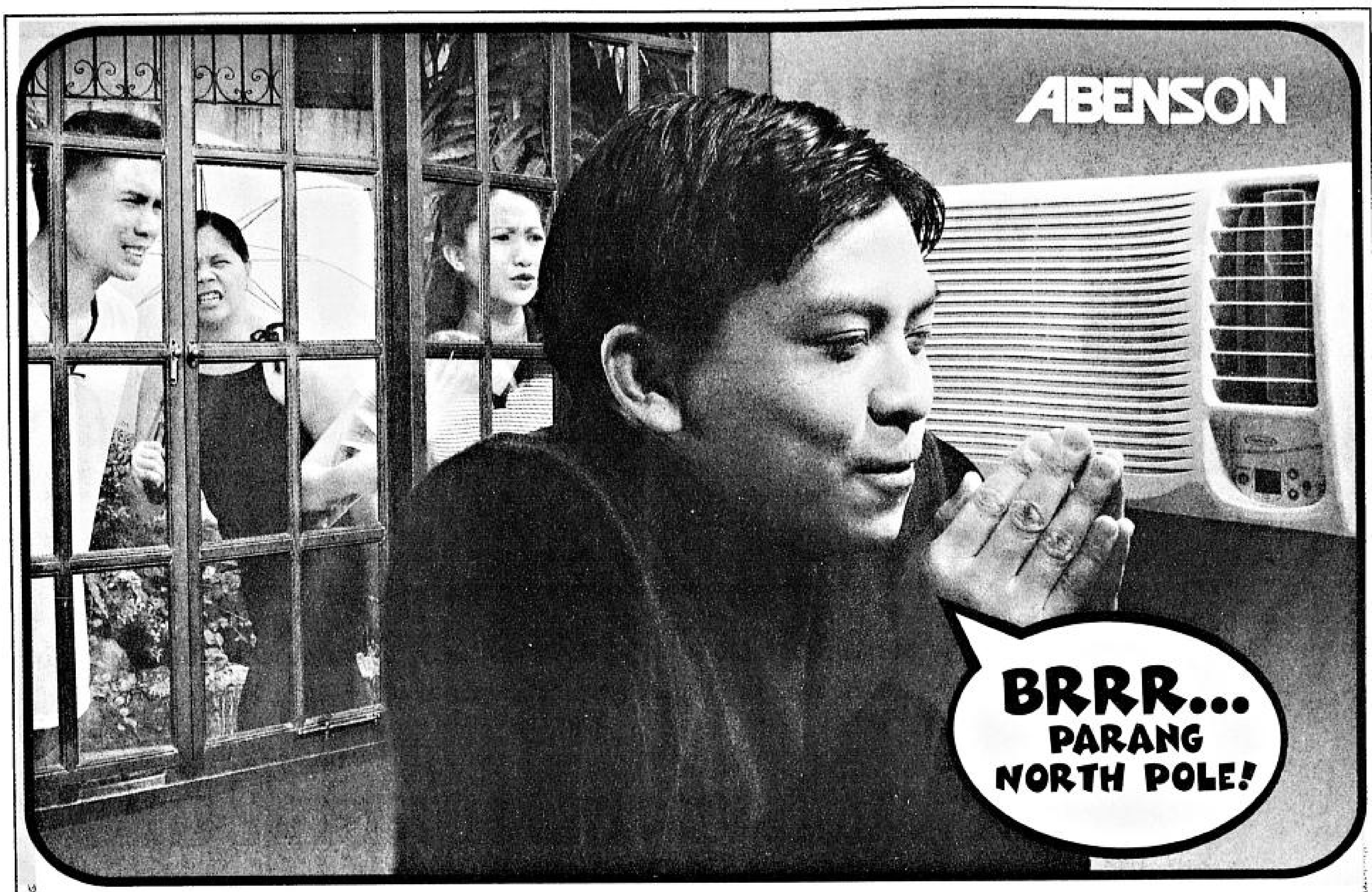
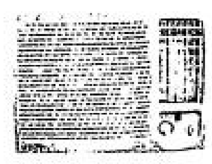
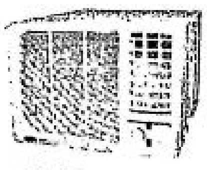


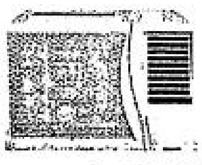
Abenson ang katapat sa init ng Summer!

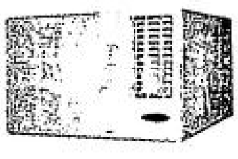
Avail of Abenson's exciting promos to keep you cool this summer!

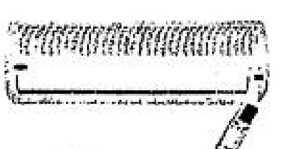
LG LA-050MP
.50 HP room aircon
manual control
10.4 EER
₱ 6,995


CONDURA FCC 055BP
.50 HP room aircon
10.3 EER
manual control
₱ 7,995

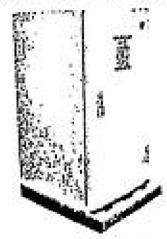

Carrier FCA 095BP
1.0 HP room aircon
manual control
10.5 EER
₱ 13,499

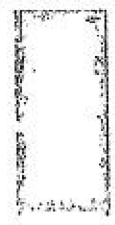

Panasonic SC121VPH
1.5 HP room aircon
10.3 EER
₱ 15,999
FREE Deskfan


KOLIN KAG 19RE
2.0 HP room aircon
10.0 EER
with remote control
₱ 18,375

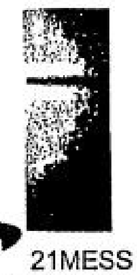

Carrier 42PPA009
1.0 HP split
wall mounted
11.0 EER
₱ 24,190

TOSHIBA RAS 18UKP2L
2.0 HP split type
wall mounted
₱ 37,000


Kelvinator K5SD
5.0 cuft single door
manual defrost system
₱ 7,795


SHARP SJ22TS
7.5 cuft single door
manual defrost system
205 EEF
₱ 8,598

Whirlpool WR1899C
6.0 cuft single door
semi automatic defrost system
₱ 10,300


SAMSUNG 21MESS
7 cuft two-door refrigerator
No Frost System
₱ 12,995

LG GR292QLC
8.4 cuft two-door
No Frost System
₱ 14,995

TOSHIBA GRS 32PT
10 cuft two-door
No Frost System
₱ 17,595

Whirlpool WR3198D
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No Frost System
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Panasonic NR A801FP
8 cuft upright freezer
manual defrost system
₱ 13,999
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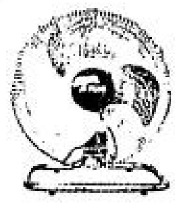
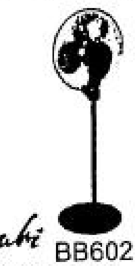
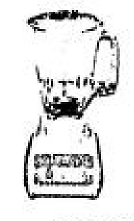
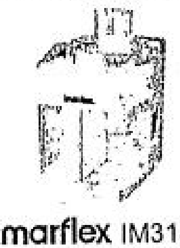
UNION IMD 16
16" (40.64 cm)
deskfan in lively colors
₱ 528


A PLUS AP18
18" (45.72 cm) Industrial fan
strong wind 3 speed control
₱ 945


Asahi BB6026
16" (40.64 cm)
stand fan
₱ 795


Dowell BL9888
3 speed glass jar blender
₱ 698


imarflex IM3180
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Juicer
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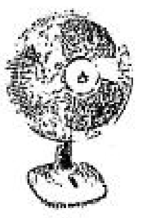

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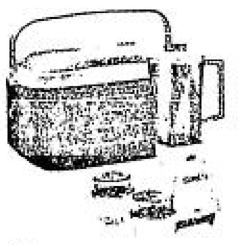

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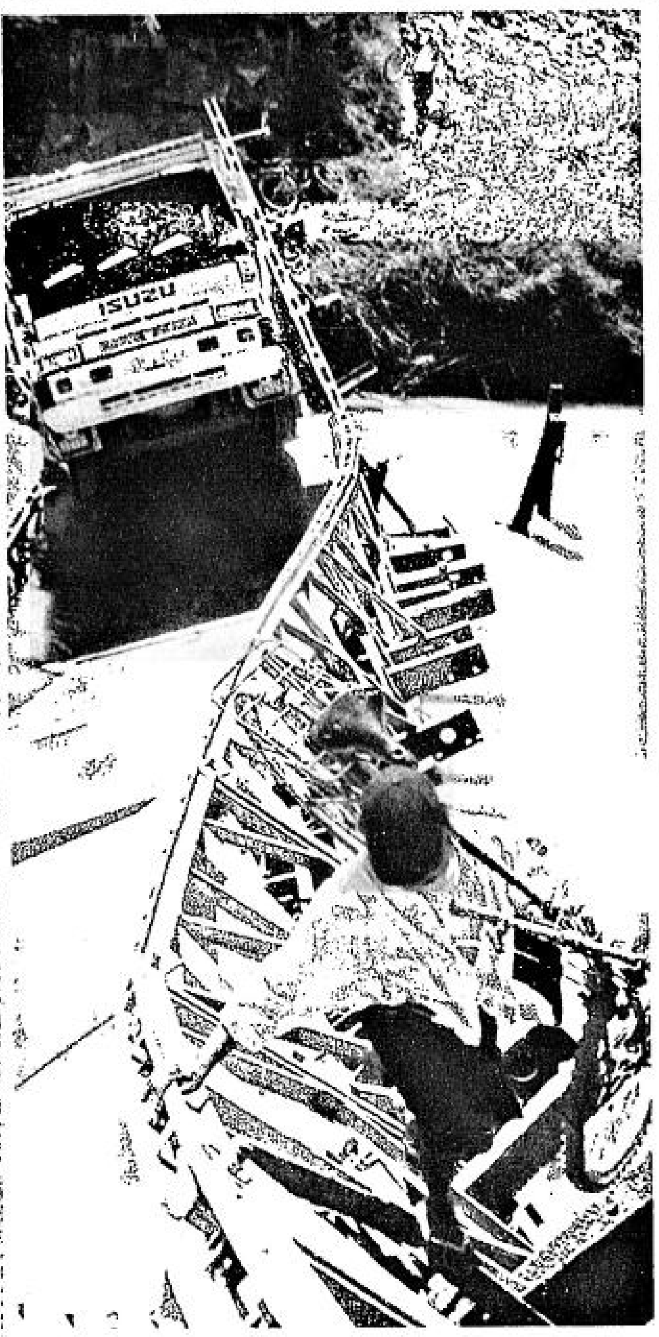


WAYWARD TRUCK REUTERS

A 10-wheel truck was all it took to destroy a makeshift bridge spanning a river in Candaba, Pampanga. The bridge collapsed due to the sheer weight of the truck that was carrying gravel.

School dean found dead with 35 stab wounds

CALAMBA CITY—A dean of a college in San Pablo City was found dead inside his apartment believed to be killed by his teenage lover, according to police.

Dean Rodrigo Salazar of the STI College of Nursing in San Pablo City was stabbed 35 times by his 15-year-old lover inside his apartment in San Pablo, past 10 p.m., Tuesday.

Senior Supt. Edwin Corvera, Laguna police director, said Salazar was a native of Isabela province, but resided in Barangay San Mateo, San Pablo City, where he was sharing a rented apartment with a co-teacher.

Corvera said neighbors of Salazar saw the suspect at around 9 p.m., and minutes after, they heard shouts.

Right after the shouts were heard, the unidentified co-teacher came out of the apartment.

The neighbors again reportedly heard the victim shouting, "*Tama na, tama na*, please (Enough, enough, please)."

Silenced ensued, then the witnesses said they saw the suspect come out.

When they went to check on what happened, they saw Salazar bloodied with 35 stab wounds.

They called the police. Apparently, the couple was quarreling over a still unknown reason. One witness, who is a co-teacher, said Salazar was angry at the suspect over money matters.

He said that a few days before, he had been hearing the couple having fights about money.

The victim's body was found an hour after he was seen alive by the witnesses.

The apartment of Salazar was known to be frequented by male teenagers.

Police have yet to recover the weapon used in killing the victim. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

UN, European Commission OK $3.7M aid for Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the European Commission (EC) recently signed a $3.7 million program for residents of several Mindanao areas affected by armed confrontations between the military and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The program, to be implemented by the Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCO) over an 18-month period, will benefit people displaced by hostilities in the provinces of Cotabato, Davao del Sur, Sarangani, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Zamboanga Sur, Zamboanga Norte, Zamboanga Sibugay, Sulu, Basilan, Palawan and Tawi-Tawi.

Aveen Acuña-Gulo, communication specialist for the United Nation Multi-Donor Program (UNMDP), said the program would combine short and medium-term strategies and complement rehabilitation efforts already being implemented by the national government and local government units to meet the needs of displaced families.

"It will ensure the rehabilitation of at least 10,000 displaced people and prepare them before returning to their places of origin or settling in another location," Gulo said. *Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

3 NPA rebels killed in Surigao del Norte clash

SURIGAO CITY—Army soldiers yesterday clashed with a large number of New People's Army rebels in a remote village of Alegria town in Surigao del Norte, according to the military.

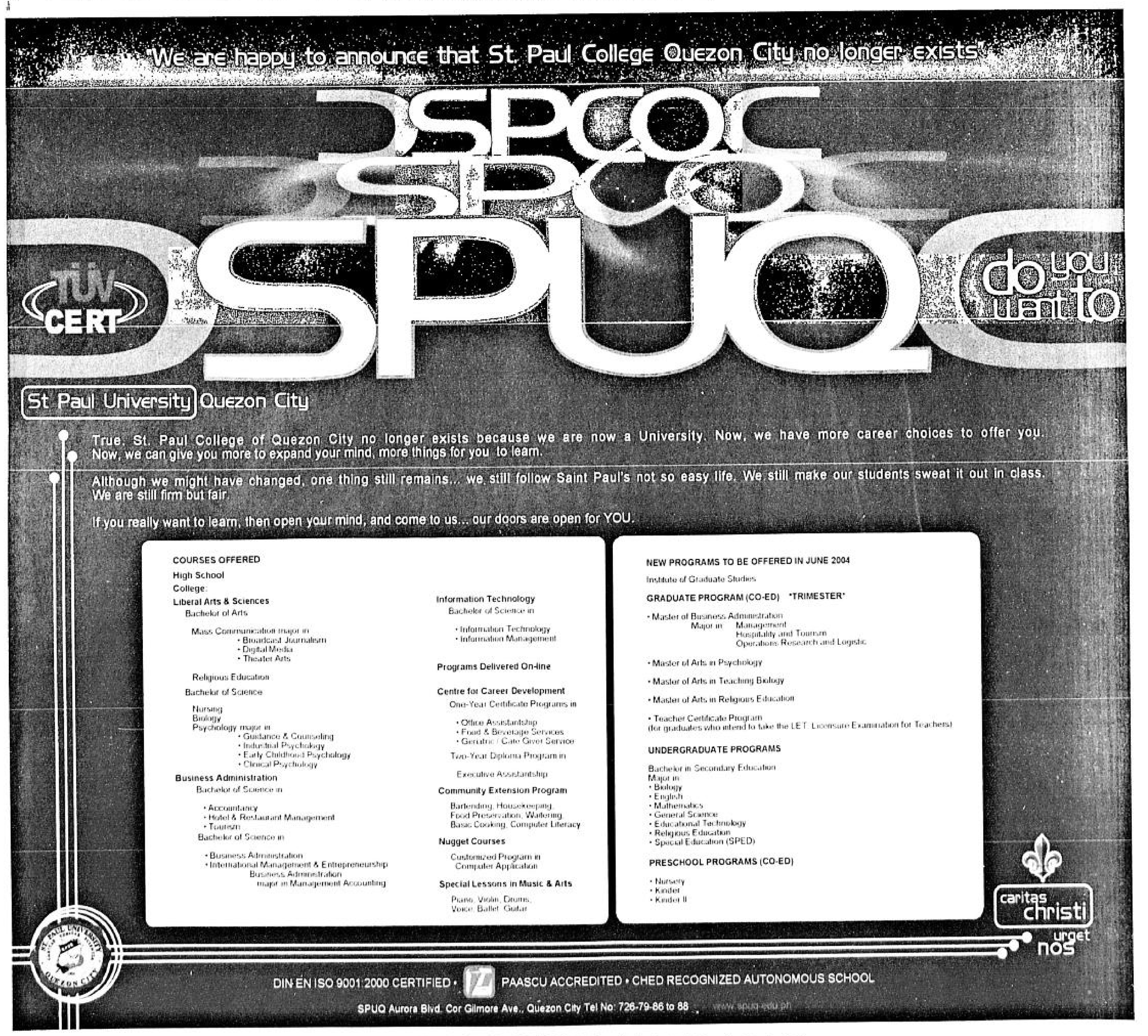
Initial reports said at least a dozen rebels, including the leader of the NPA's Front Committee 16, have been killed, but the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City said only three rebels were confirmed dead.

Among the fatalities was NPA leader Eusebio "Ka Iraq" Dumaget, said Lt. Col. Edito Nisnisan, 20th IB commander.

Nisnisan said the clash ensued when some 100 rebels fired on soldiers patrolling Barangay San Juan at around 11 a.m. He said the soldiers repulsed the attackers.

The retreating rebels left the bodies of Dumaget and other comrades, he said.

Soldiers recovered two .45 cal. pistols from the scene of the battle. *Franklin Caliguid and Grace Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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Baguio testing use of coconut fuel as anti-pollution measure

BAGUIO CITY—The Department of Energy is piloting in Baguio the commercial distribution of coco fuel (coconut methyl ester), whose air-cleansing potential has interested the United States, Japan and the International Clean Cities program of the US Agency for International Development.

Coco fuel, whose purest form sells at P64 a liter, is being primed for export to these countries, but proponents want to penetrate the country's transport industry first before it explores that market, said Divina Chingcuanco, USAID country director.

She said USAID wants to see coco fuel's air-cleansing capabilities applied first on polluted cities in the country.

Energy Undersecretary Eduardo Mañalac said the US bio fuel uses soybean, not coconut, but coco fuel has passed two decades of tests to prove that it virtually cleans engines and all polluting byproducts expelled by motor vehicles.

Test

Both USAID and the US Department of Energy asked the Baguio City government to test the impact of fuel derived from biological sources like coconut and from liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for the clean cities program, said Victor Aquitania, the city planning officer in charge of environmental concerns.

Its impact would be reported to the USAID next year, Aquitania said, because Mayor Bernardo Vergara had pledged to cut down the city's pollution by 10 percent this year.

Simultaneous with the Baguio test, Metro Manila would pilot the use of fuel derived from natural gas that is piped in by the country's natural gas facility in Palawan, Chingcuanco said.

Coco fuel processing plants in Laguna have assured the government that they can supply the government 70,000 metric tons of the bio fuel.

In a briefing, representatives of the Philippine Coconut Authority said the annual coconut oil production reaches 1.4 billion liters from the 2.5 billion kilograms of coconuts the country harvests yearly.

Export

The PCA said 80 percent of the current coconut production is exported.

Mañalac said the Baguio coco fuel test would ride on President Macapagal-Arroyo's Feb. 9 circular to all government agencies that asked them to mix 1 percent of coco fuel in the fuel that all government-owned vehicles use.

He said Memorandum Circular No. 55 gave the government a year from May to benefit from the merits of coco fuel, before Malacañang could order the country's mass transport system to use coco fuel.

He said the DOE is negotiating with oil firms to "pre-mix" coco fuel in processed diesel but these talks have been hampered with "technical issues."

He said the government is seeking out independent groups to help distribute coco fuel to the provinces, where agencies are required to buy the products.

Mañalac told the Baguio-Benguet chapter of the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines (Fejodap) that the fuel derivative also increases the mileage that is normally achieved using the same amount of diesel fuel.

He said the only potential drawback is that a coco fuel generates abnormally high heat that burns all carbon monoxide emissions, as well as the rubber gaskets cushioning most diesel-fed engines.

"If you go beyond 10-percent or 20-percent use, it will not be good for the vehicle. You cannot use 100 percent of coco fuel in the engine," he said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Gov says some Negros gov't workers addicted to drugs

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz admitted that some Capitol employees are drug users and he has taken moves to convince drug dependent provincial employees to undergo rehabilitation.

Arnaiz did not name names or mention the number of personnel who are hooked on drugs but he said two of them have already completed the 45-day rehabilitation and treatment program at the government-run Negros Oriental Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Center (NODTRC).

The governor added that two other Capitol employees have already manifested their willingness to take the treatment program following his sustained prodding.

He said most of these abusers are rank and file employees except for one who is an engineer.

"I pity these employees because they have talents and skills. That is why I went further by personally persuading them to undergo rehabilitation," he said.

The governor said he decided to have the employees rehabilitated instead of firing their service because he believed they deserve a second chance.

"When you help somebody get rehabilitated, you certainly attain some kind of personal satisfaction . . . you are not only helping the addict, but also their families and the society in general," Arnaiz added. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Davao taxi drivers get lessons from DOT execs

DAVAO CITY—Taxi drivers in the city are getting a major makeover.

On Saturday, the Department of Tourism in Southern Mindanao gave taxi drivers at the Davao International Airport lessons on basic courtesy, values, and good grooming.

Francisco Villaraiz, senior tourism officer of DOT Region 9, said last Saturday's training was only the first of a series of sessions they designed for taxi drivers.

In the coming days, Villaraiz said taxi drivers would also be taught about tourism destinations and historical sites in the city.

"We will teach them the facts, history, population, products and how to make an itinerary on the description of the different places," he said.

The program, Villaraiz said, would eventually turn taxi drivers into effective tour guides for first time visitors to the city.

He said this would eventually help the city's image because "first impressions are important."

Villaraiz admitted the idea was adopted from the models now being implemented in Singapore and Hong Kong.

The program, he said, had been very successful in those countries.

He said taxi drivers would not be accredited under the DOT's Mabuhay Host Program unless they underwent training.

Aside from taxi drivers, Villaraiz said the DOT would also train hotel receptionists, restaurateurs, and even tour operators. *Joel Escovilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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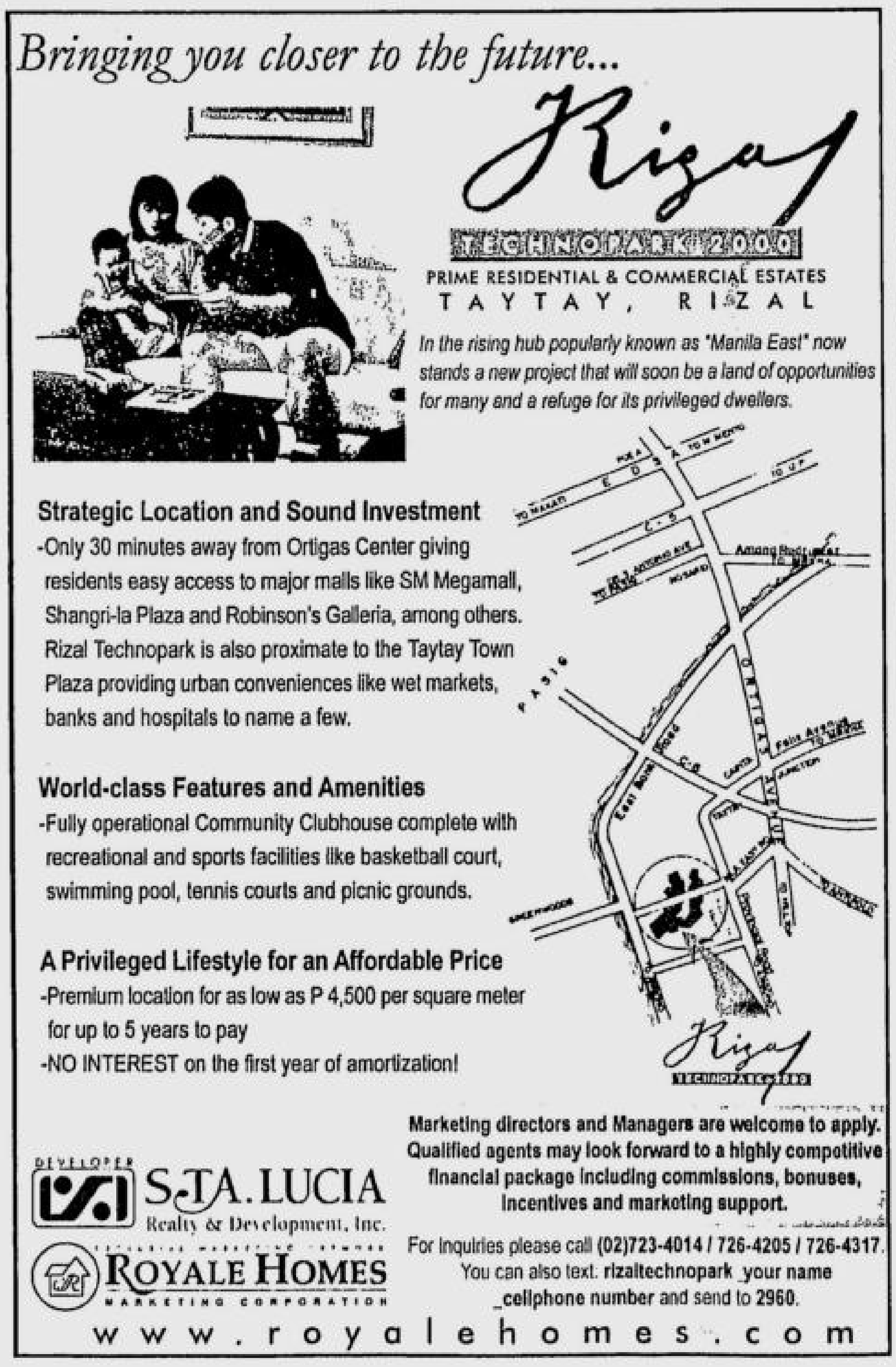
Per DTI NCR Permit No.3873 Series of 2003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AFP faces case on missing activists

TACLOBAN CITY—A petition for habeas corpus was filed on Monday against top military and defense officials to compel them to release two Bayan Muna members who were abducted in Baybay town, Leyte last month.

Named respondents in the petition filed before the Regional Trial Court in Ormoc City Leyte were Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Narciso Abaya and Maj. Gen. Glenn Rabonza, chief of the 8th Infantry Division.

Petitioners Melissa Portaleza and Filomeno Salazar, Jr., Bayan Muna chair in Leyte, asked the court to compel the respondents to produce her husband Rolando and Jacqueline Paguntalan.

Also named respondents were Brig. Gen. Pedro Costelo, commanding general of the Military Intelligence Service; Major Gen. Jacinto Ligot, Central Command chief; Major Lenart Lelina, Intelligence Service Unit (ISU)-Eastern Visayas head; and ISU operatives Tactical Sgt. Vicente Mao, and two others identified only as Tisoy and Jun-jun.

Rolando, 28, and Paguntalan, 26, were on their way to a Bayan Muna meeting on Feb. 21 when they were abducted by seven armed men at Agta Beach, Barangay Kilim, Baybay.

The two and a companion came from Ormoc City and made a short stopover to take some snacks. They were about to board a motorcycle when the seven forced Rolando and Paguntalan into a waiting van. Their companion was able to escape and report the abduction to the Bayan Muna office.

In their petition, Melissa and Salazar said witnesses had informed them that Rolando and Paguntalan were kidnapped by members of the military.

They, however, admitted that they had no idea where the victims were being held.

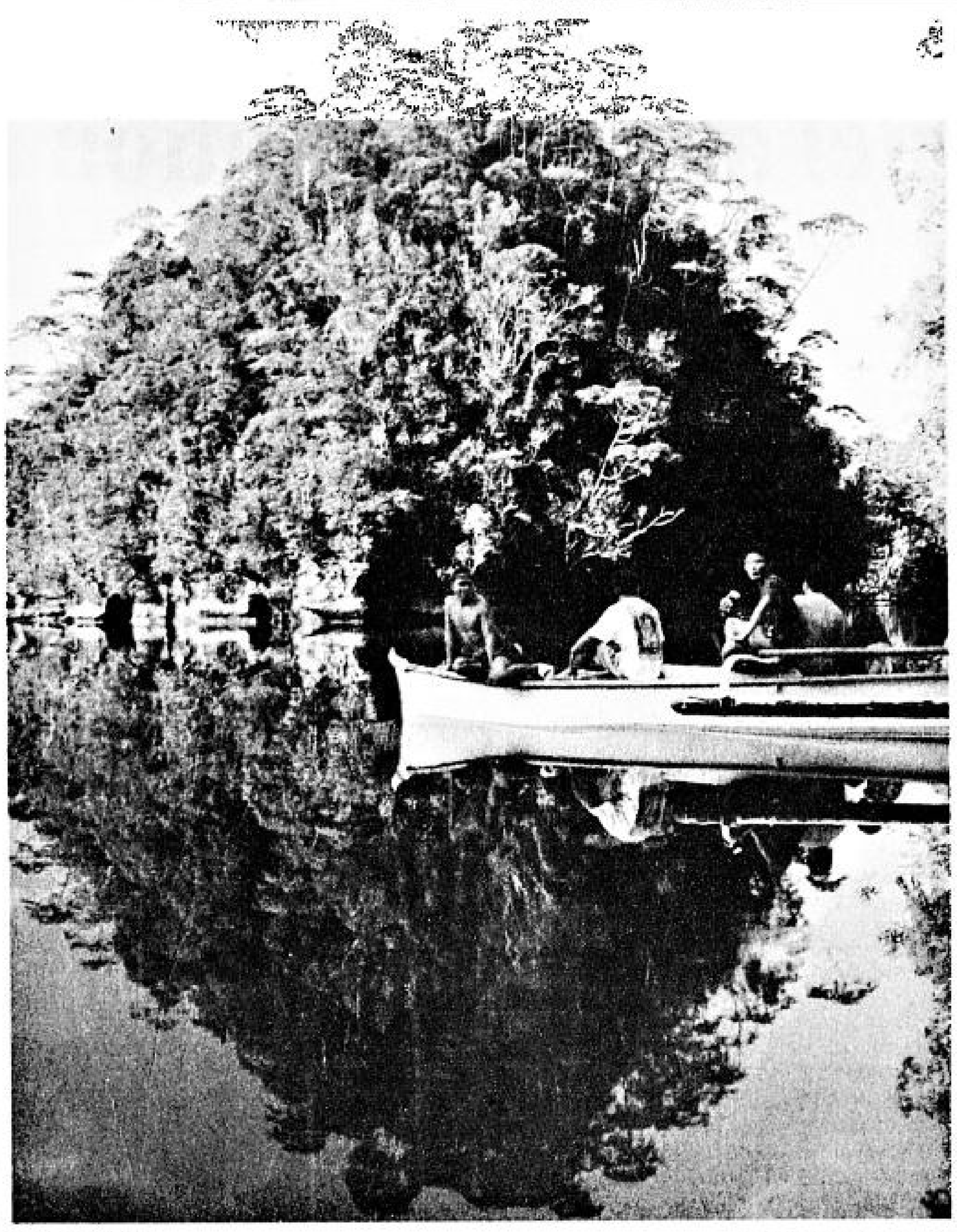
The INQUIRER went to the ISU office in San Jose District here but a staffer said Lelina was out and no one was available to answer questions in connection with the petition.

But Rabonza earlier denied allegations that they were involved in the abduction, saying the military had long respected the group as a legitimate political organization.

Fedilito Dacut, lawyer of the petitioners, said they expect the two missing Bayan Muna members to "resurface" following the filing of the petition.

"We are pinning high hopes that through this petition, the respondents will bring to the court Rolando and Jacqueline," he said.

A human rights group involved in the search for the two missing Bayan Muna members believed that they were still alive. *Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*



RELAXING JIMMY DOMINGO/CONTRIBUTOR
Some places in the country are worth whatever arduous trip it takes to get there like the Sohoton Cove in Socorro, Surigao del Norte, which casts a reflection on still, clear waters.

Carpenter draws death for daughter's rape

BACOLOD CITY—A carpenter from Sipalay City Negros Occidental was sentenced to death on Tuesday for raping his daughter after beating her up and tying her to a post.

Judge Henry Arles of the Kabankalan City Regional Trial Court also ordered Conrado de la Cruz Tabuada to pay the victim P150,000 in damages and indemnity.

"It is detestably inhuman to sexually molest one's offspring. The rape committed by a father against his own daughter has no place in our society. No crime is more horrid and disgusting than incestuous rape," Arles said in his decision.

Such offense, he added, was deserving, not of society's mercy, compassion and leniency, but of the supreme penalty provided by law.

Court records showed that the victim, then 11, was a Grade 4 pupil when her father raped her on Oct. 8, 1996 inside their house in Sitio Binulig, Barangay San Jose, Sipalay, about 178 km southwest of this city.

Tabuada beat her up with a piece of wood after seeing the house in disarray when he arrived from work. The girl tried to run but he chased her.

When he caught up with her, he tied her to a post with a nylon rope. The girl lost her consciousness.

She regained her senses after her brother splashed her with water. Tabuada then brought his daughter into the house and reprimanded her.

It was then that Tabuada raped her. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Cop suspended for sleeping as GMA visited

MANAOAG, Pangasinan—For literally sleeping on the job when President Macapagal-Arroyo arrived here last month, the town's police chief was suspended for 20 days.

Senior Supt. Mario Sandiego, Pangasinan police director, suspended Chief Insp. Romulo Dural who, together with some policemen, was sleeping at the police station when Ms Macapagal arrived in the town at 2:30 a.m. on Feb. 21.

Sandiego said an investigating team he formed recommended that Dural also be relieved from his position.

But Sandiego called the recommendation "too harsh, considering the circumstances."

Too tired

Sandiego said Dural and some local policemen "were too tired" because the night before the President arrived, they had to secure two schools that held their junior-senior parties.

The policemen were also busy securing some senatorial candidates who campaigned in the town the night before the President's visit, he said.

"Besides, it was 2:30 in the morning," he added.

The radio operator who was supposed to receive the message that Ms Macapagal was on her way to Manaoag was also sleeping so he failed to inform Dural about her arrival.

Dural earlier suspended the radio operator for seven days and forfeited his salary for the duration of his suspension.

Sandiego said the policemen were fortunate that the visit was timed with the elections, so Ms Macapagal seemed not to mind what happened and was even smiling.

The President came from a campaign sortie in 12 towns in western Pangasinan and went to Manaoag to attend Mass.

Clearance

Sandiego said he was still clearing the suspension issue with the Commission on Elections, although he was sure the Comelec would approve it because it was an "administrative concern" and not election-related.

There are only 31 policemen in Manaoag (pop: 54,700), a popular pilgrimage site because of the Our Lady of Manaoag Shrine.

Sandiego said the local policemen are on an eight-hour shifts and he encouraged them to rest so their efficiency would always be at peak when they were on duty. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Orchid farm displaces farmers

By Russell Arador
PDI Central Luzon Desk

BAMBAN, Tarlac—The fight is on for control of about 50 hectares of land cleared and developed by farmers 50 years ago but are now being converted into an orchid farm by Taiwanese investors under a lease agreement with the Clark Development Corp. (CDC).

Two of the 13 families affected by the investment project of the Orchids World International Inc. (OWII) in Barangay San Vicente in the Sacobia area here have already left their farms and homes.

But Jesus Cayton, who recently received a letter from CDC asking him to leave or face eviction, refused to budge. "This has been my home for as long as I can remember and I'm not abandoning it," he said.

Cayton and some 100 farmers on Monday, many of them belonging to Aeta families in the villages of Barangays Burog, San Martin and Sto. Nino, marched through Barangay San Vicente and held a short program in front of the orchid farm to air their appeal to the CDC.

Visible over the makeshift wall enclosing the OWII property were nine dome-shaped nets housing orchids grown in the farm.

Rommel Soriano, a village councilor, said the two families who have left and on whose properties the nets now stand, have yet to be compensated.

"The CDC promised them money in exchange for their homes but until now, not a single centavo was given to them," Soriano said.

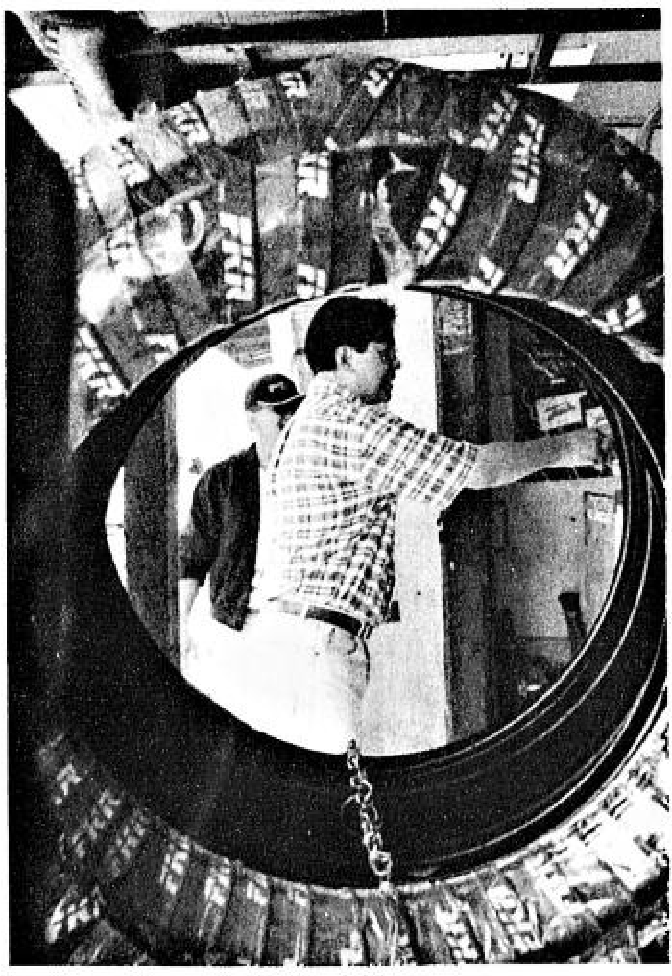
Edwin Bacay, acting officer of the CDC's land preservation and development office, assured the farmers that they would be compensated based on valuation provided by law.

He said the CDC is looking into claims for compensation by farmers affected by the project. "We are here to help," he said.

Bacay said the payments were delayed because the CDC has to follow the process required by the Commission on Audit.

He said the CDC respects the farmers' rights but they also have to respect the government's rights over the land.

Soriano, who chairs the village's committee on agriculture, said the development of the land into an orchid farm destroyed plants and fruit-bearing trees planted by the local farmers. He said the farmers were not compensated for these.



FRAMED by a rubber tire, presidential candidate Lacson wooed votes in Laguna in a recent sortie. PDI PHOTO

Lacson promises to help secure slain mayor's kin

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson has vowed to help the family of slain Mayor Roy Jumao-as of Hindang town Leyte, who was one of his police officers when he was Metro Cebu District Command (Metrodiscom) chief in the 1980s.

"I assured the family that I would help them in their request for security. They want to secure the suspects who are presently detained in the police and (for) the eyewitness. The family wants justice and they want to get the mastermind," said Lacson, who was here since Monday for a series of campaign sorties.

The senator went to the wake of the mayor and his son Jake at the Sacred Heart Church on Jakosalem Street, Cebu City to express his condolences.

The mayor's wife Narcissa failed to hold back her tears when she asked Lacson's help in ensuring their safety and of their witnesses and the two suspects now detained at the Cebu City Police Office.

Lacson said he could ask some of the policemen who used to be with him during his stay as Metrodiscom chief to provide protection to the Jumao-as family, the suspects and witnesses.

A policeman and a carpenter were arrested and charged with double murder after they were tagged as the ones who shot and killed the mayor and his son on March 4 in front of their apartment on Jakosalem Street.

PO1 Roque Bisnar, 33, a beat patrolman in Subangdaku police precinct in Mandaue City and Neddy Polistico, 31, denied any involvement in the killings.

The police, however, were still conducting an investigation to determine the identity of the mastermind and the motive for the killing. Among the angles being looked at were politics and business.

Lacson was Metrodiscom chief in the late 1980s and Jumao-as was one of his policemen.

The senator described Jumao-as as a good cop who was direct and straightforward.

NPA guerrillas execute Cotabato village official

MAKILALA, North Cotabato—Suspected New People's Army (NPA) rebels on Tuesday executed a village official here after they dragged him away from his wife.

Supt. Melchor Loyola, provincial police director, identified the victim as Barangay Captain Maximo Rabina of Rodero Village.

Loyola said Rabina and his wife Tita had just arrived in the village from nearby Kidapawan when three rebels approached him.

He said an altercation ensued between the suspects and the village official.

At this point, two of the suspects dragged Rabina while telling him "*pirmado ka na.*"

Loyola said the wife pleaded with the rebels to spare her husband's life but one of them pointed a gun at her.

Tita later told the INQUIRER that she fainted because of fear.

When she regained consciousness, she said her husband was already dead.

Loyola said Rabino died from a bullet that entered his chin and went through his head. *Jeffrey M. Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

'Hanging judge' metes out 26th death sentence

URDANETA CITY—A regional trial court judge here has meted out the death penalty to a man and his two sons for the murder of a relative in December 2002.

In a 105-page decision on Tuesday, Judge Joven Costales sentenced Danilo Fajardo, 47, and his sons Elmer, 26, and Ramil, 23, to die by lethal injection for killing Eduard Sanchez, 37, of Barangay Awed Palina in this city.

It was the 26th death sentence imposed by Costales, known as Pangasinan's "hanging judge."

Court records showed that in the morning of Dec. 29, 2002, Fajardo and his sons, who were armed with a rifle, arrived from Metro Manila and immediately went to Sanchez's house. Unable to find Sanchez, the group went to their house, several meters away from Sanchez's.

Not long after, the court said, Edgardo Sanchez, a brother of Fajardo's wife and Sanchez's father, went to the Fajardos' house and asked why they were looking for his son.

Elmer, who was holding the rifle, came out of the house and fired at but missed Edgardo, who ran. Sanchez, who just came out of his house, also ran away but Elmer ran after him and gunned him down.

Ramil, who was armed with a bolo, came out of their house and hacked the fallen Sanchez.

Fajardo, according to court records, grabbed the rifle from Elmer and struck Sanchez in the face.

Fajardo later told the court that Sanchez attacked him with a bolo and fell unconscious during the attack.

Elmer and Ramil testified that they were only defending their father from Sanchez.

But the court dismissed the Fajardos' claim as mere alibi and imposed the death penalty.

Costales told the INQUIRER that Sanchez used to till the farm that was turned over to the Fajardos in 2002. *Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Opposition row worsens

From page A1

Lacson was reacting to the claim of Rod Reyes, media bureau chief of the Poe-led Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, that the senator was supposed to withdraw from the presidential race in April.

Reyes said the two opposition presidential candidates had agreed that Lacson would back out if the disqualification petition against Poe in the Supreme Court was dismissed and the actor's survey ratings by March exceeded those of the senator.

"FPJ and I talk one-on-one. How can he say such things when he was not in my meetings with FPJ?" Lacson said of Reyes.

Asked if he was adversely affected by Reyes' statements, Lacson said: "No. I know that he is lying. How can I be affected?"

Lacson's spokesperson Lito Banayo said Reyes was in no position to make such pronouncements because he was not even in constant touch with the KNP standard-bearer. "Who was he quoting? How could he have knowledge of such agreements first hand?" Banayo told the INQUIRER.

Too cocky

A senatorial candidate of Poe took the cudgels for Reyes, saying that the problem with the Lacson camp was that "*mas bilib sila sa sarili nila* (they're too cocky)."

"That's the most ideal way," Jinggoy Estrada said of a Lacson withdrawal. "Or that's the gentleman's agreement."

The KNP senatorial candidate said Lacson had no chance of overtaking Poe's survey ratings, an indication of a candidate's winnability, and of getting the support of his father, deposed President Joseph Estrada. "He's too far behind," the young Estrada said of Lacson.

Overwhelming response

But Lacson said that while the surveys had yet to show he was gaining ground, he got an "overwhelming" response from voters during his sorties in Southern Mindanao, Western Visayas, Southern Tagalog and the Cagayan Valley.

Lacson said the Poe camp must be shuddering in the wake of the growing support he was receiving. "Are they afraid I'd have a vice presidential candidate soon?" he said, half in jest. He refused further comment on his remark, leaving reporters guessing wether it was pure bravado.

His lone senatorial candidate, Nueva Vizcaya Rep. Carlos Padilla, however, said that he received reports from Bacolod that Alyansa ng Pag-Asa standard-bearer Raul Roco would be willing to be a vice presidential candidate.

"I was interviewed on a Bacolod radio station and on dzAR in Manila, and was told that someone close to Roco in Bacolod said he (Roco) was willing to slide down to vice president and Bro. Eddie Villanueva will run for senator," Padilla said.

He, however, admitted that this was still in the realm of speculation.

No sliding down.

As expected, Roco laughed off Padilla's statement. "Thank you for thinking of me," Roco curtly said in response to Padilla's statement. "I will welcome their help in a Roco administration."

Roco had said that he would never agree to become the running mate of anyone, saying that his camp was better organized and had better chances of winning.

Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan, Roco's spokesperson and political strategist, said that if there was anybody who should slide down to the No. 2 slot, it should be Lacson or President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We submit that it is Roco," who could bring about change in government, Galvez-Tan said. "There is nowhere in the plans (of Alyansa) for Raul Roco to slide down. When we are talking of the coalition, we don't talk about sliding down," he said.

Galvez-Tan said it was impossible for Roco to slide down to the vice presidential slot because "he had been topping the surveys for the last 15 months (until December 2003)."

He then said that it was high time to put an end to all these talk of Roco sliding down because he would never turn his back on the people.

Exploratory talks with Ping

Galvez-Tan admitted that he held exploratory talks with the camp of Lacson and others, but he clarified that it was not Roco who initiated the talks.

"Each one is sending signals to each other through emissaries and common friends, and in various forms and channels."

He said the talks with the other emissaries of the candidates were "open-ended discussions and exploratory ones."

"We don't talk about commitments, agenda, scenarios on who should slide down. Basically we talk, we have friendly discussions," Galvez-Tan said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Muslim . . .

From page A1

to practice family planning without fear of censure.

Some 200 Muslim clerics met on Wednesday at the Marco Polo Hotel here and agreed that family planning was important "for the welfare of the mother, the child and for the couple to raise *saleh* (good) children who are pious, healthy, educated, useful and well-behaved citizens."

They issued the fatwah to various Muslim communities immediately after the meeting.

Tomas Osias, executive director of the Population Commission, who attended the meeting, said that about 55 percent of women in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao wanted to practice family planning but were constrained by the fear that Islam would not allow it.

"But with the fatwah clearly put in place, Muslims can now be [informed] that family planning is in consonance with their Islamic faith and is for the welfare of the mother and child," he said.

No to vasectomy, ligation

But while the fatwah allows the use of "safe and legal contraception methods in accordance with the Islamic shari'ah (courts) and approved by a credible Muslim physician," it prohibits the use of vasectomy and ligation.

Mufti Sheik Abdullah Hamzautoh, a Muslim religious leader from Basilan, said the family planning fatwah was not contrary to Islam as it would promote the family health and welfare of the Philippine Muslim community.

Married couples have all the "freedom" to ensure a healthy and happy family and that would include family planning with the use of the contraceptives, he said.

The Popcom has noted that the country's Muslim clerics generally have a more liberal view of population control than their counterparts in the dominant Catholic Church which condemns the use of contraceptive devices as immoral.

Dates back to Muhammad

A conference statement issued by the participating religious leaders said family planning was not really a new issue for Muslims as it dates back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad.

They said that while Muslim religious leaders agree on the importance of family planning, they have been deeply divided over the past few years on the methods to be adopted.

The muftis said that in the latter part of 2003 they conducted a massive research, using the Koran, the Muslim holy book, as reference, to arrive at a common stand on birth control.

They said that some Filipino Muslim scholars even communicated with their counterparts in Egypt last January, and the Grand Mufti of Egypt said that he too was for population control.

ARMM population rate

Osias said the fatwah was timely for the ARMM whose population growth rate of 2.76 percent is higher than the national average of 2.34 percent.

He hoped the fatwah would help in reducing the high mortality rate of infants and women in the region and in other parts of Mindanao.

As many as 200 to 300 women die each year in the ARMM and in Northern Mindanao from pregnancy-related illnesses and from childbirth.

Some 55 babies born every year in the two regions also die at birth, according to the 2003 State of the Philippine Population Report.

With one of the highest birth rates in Asia, the Philippines will add 1.6 million to 2 million people to its ballooning population this year, raising it to 84 million, according to the Population Commission.

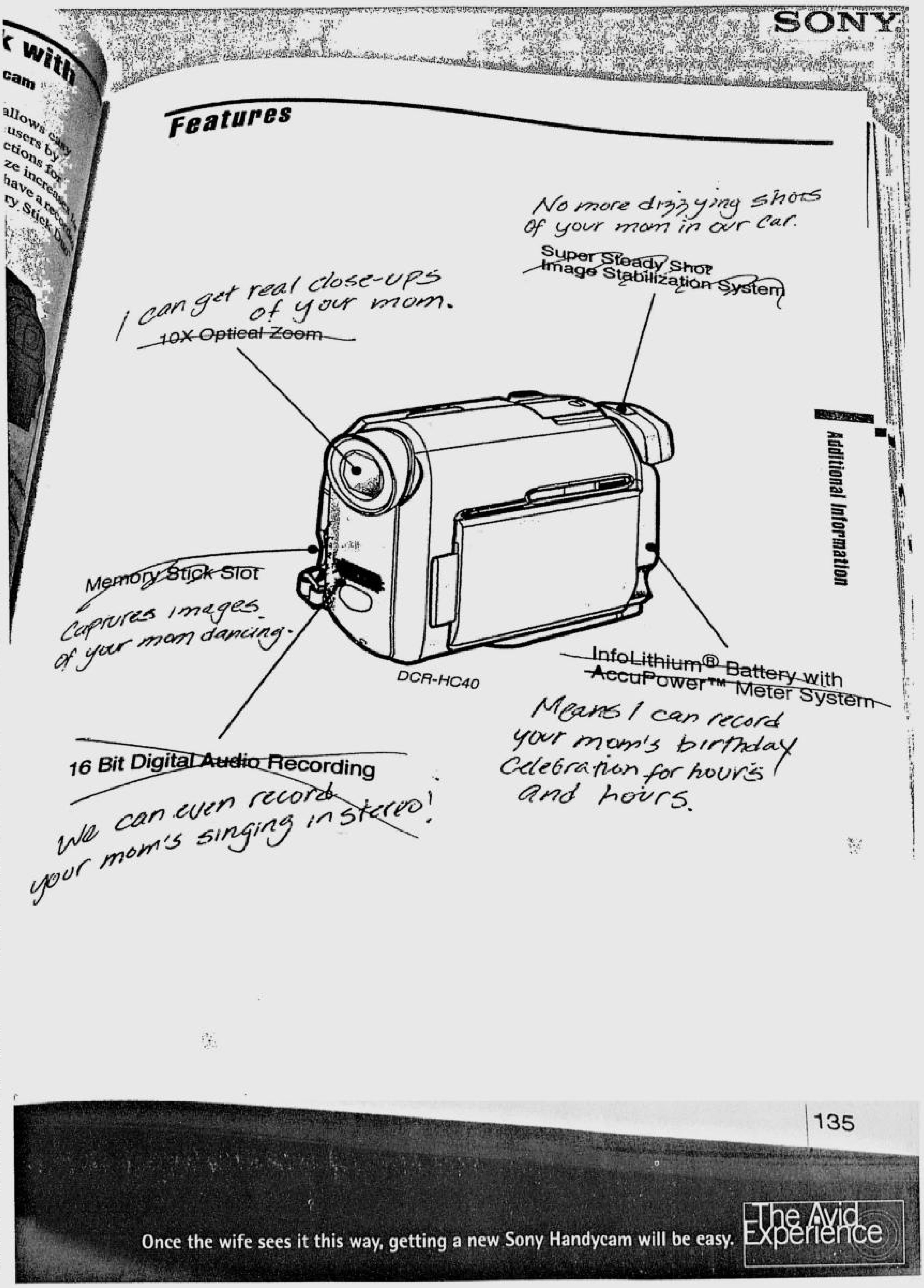
Poverty trap

The commission predicted last month that the country's population could explode to 170 million in less than 30 years, an outcome that is certain to trap many more millions of Filipinos in poverty.

An estimated 40 percent of Filipinos now live below the poverty line which the government defines as an income of P50 a day.

Osias has called for urgent action, saying that presidential candidates in particular have to address the issue as it has a huge impact on economic development, food security, health, education, environment and housing.

Population control has largely taken a back seat in the election campaign, with the front-runners, President Macapagal-Arroyo and opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr., campaigning mainly on pledges to fight corruption and enforce law and order.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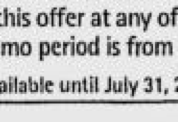

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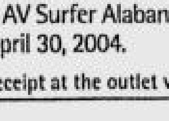

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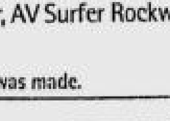

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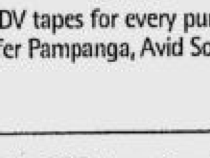

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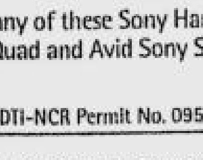

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INC, El Shaddai back GMA stand on Erap

From page A1

of the INC and El Shaddai was almost a vindication of the President.

Ms Macapagal herself said she was glad the two groups understood her policy of humane treatment for her predecessor.

The President has denied that the arrangement was a political deal with Estrada to curry favors from his supporters for the May 10 election.

Sources have said earlier that Estrada was the key to INC support for Ms Macapagal. The INC has reportedly asked for house arrest for him.

Robot and Ecleo

In the statement, the two groups noted the cases of two other prominent prisoners.

"We did not hear the same howl of protest when Abu Sayyaf leader Ghalib Andang aka Commander Robot, who has been charged with a number of heinous crimes, was accorded medical treatment upon his capture, or when cult leader Ruben Ecleo, who has been charged with parricide, was granted bail so he can seek medical treatment for his heart ailment," they said, adding:

"Compassionate, fair and just treatment of an accused is the least that can be expected in a country like ours, which has been for centuries nurtured by Christian values. After all, our laws consider the accused as innocent until proven guilty by a court of law.

"We can show charity and compassion to the accused, particularly to a former national leader, without necessarily abandoning legal procedures."

An additional statement from Robles said Ms Macapagal's "consistent stand" on "extending compassion and respect" to Estrada was "laudable."

"We agree that it is up to the court to decide on the case of the former President," it added.

Glad, relieved

In Calamba, Defensor gave the President a copy of the joint statement before she answered questions in a press conference.

"Well, I'm glad that they understood the principles that I have been very consistent about since 2001," Ms Macapagal told reporters.

Defensor said Ms Macapagal was "somehow relieved that amid the cases filed against her and the criticisms she received for President Estrada, there are some sectors like the El Shaddai and the Iglesia and former President Cory Aquino who recognize and embody her sentiments."

"This is not really a contest on whether we were right or wrong," he said. "This is enough [for] some civil society groups to be enlightened that we need to stop the disunity and mudslinging so that we can move on. The election is not about Erap; we are facing a different foe here."

Ms Macapagal laughed when asked if she could expect the same treatment from civil society and groups that had taken part in the uprising that ousted Estrada.

"In any society, you have hard-liners, the hawks, and then you have the moderates. It's really what democratic space is all about," she said.

'For the sake of many'

Ms Macapagal defended her stance vis-à-vis Estrada, saying the "special treatment that they are talking about" was "not special treatment for one man."

Again citing her State of the Nation Address in July 2001, she said: "While the wheels of justice continue to turn, for the sake of many poor who see in the personal circumstance of Estrada a mirror of the oppression that they themselves feel, it is important [for me] to be considerate of his personal circumstance."

"That is my strategic direction, and the operational details are not mine to handle," she said, distancing herself from the unusual arrangement allowing Estrada to spend time in his rest house.

"What [the two groups] are pointing out is that this issue is being blown out of proportion when in truth, if there is any privilege given to President Estrada, it is only the chance to get some sunshine and breathe some fresh air," Defensor said.

He said he was still urging house arrest for Estrada: "In the end, the Sandiganbayan will make the decision so we're leaving it up to them. [But] if it were up to me he should have been given house arrest two years ago."

'Political points'

In Manila, Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan admitted that Ms Macapagal scored "political points" in allowing Estrada to spend time in his rest house.

The senator stressed that Ms Macapagal's concern for her jailed predecessor was part of "her acts that flowed from [her] assertion" after the May 1, 2001, siege of Malacañang that she was "President of Edsa II and III."

But when asked if these would translate into votes for her, he said he did not know.

Pangilinan expressed the belief that Ms Macapagal was gaining ground in her campaign, although he also noted that it was anybody's ball game.

"Many things can still happen," he said. "What I see is that the President's campaign is beginning to pick up, while the erstwhile front-runner [Fernando Poe Jr.] has been falling in the ratings by about 10 percent, or 4 to 5 million votes. So far, it's a dead heat."

Machinery can make difference

Pangilinan said Ms Macapagal had big chances of securing a fresh mandate because the entire government machinery was behind her.

"She has the machinery," he said. "Remember that [then presidential candidate] Fidel Ramos won by only 800,000 votes in 1992. So in a close fight, [she has a chance]."

On the criminal complaint filed against Ms Macapagal et al., Pangilinan said: "Unless there is evidence that [she] had a direct hand in these acts, the charges will not fly."

He called on the Sandiganbayan "to take stock of the situation and exercise its authority and power" over Estrada. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Palace release surprises El Shaddai

EL SHADDAI spokesperson Mel Robles was surprised that the joint statement of his group and the Iglesia ni Cristo was issued first by Malacañang.

He said he was set to fax the statement to reporters covering the churches and religious groups when told by the INQUIRER that it already had a copy.

"How did that happen? We were supposed to fax it later. The INC has not even signed it yet," Robles said on the phone, adding that the El Shaddai's lines could be tapped.

He said the statement was revised several times. *Blanche S. Rivera*

'Someone higher' let his dad out, says Jinggoy

From page A1

Rolando Sacramento, Jinggoy said: *"Mas mataas pa* (From someone higher)."

He did not respond when asked if he was referring to Ebdane or someone even higher.

He begged off from disclosing more details, saying he had to join the other KNP candidates in their first Mindanao sortie.

But Jinggoy found time to say that President Macapagal-Arroyo was "better than human rights activists because she has shown good treatment to President Erap."

"These human rights activists have to show compassion," he said. "The trouble is they have none."

Jinggoy also said he was opposed to the proposal that Estrada be returned to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City. He said this was Villa-Ignacio's design. *(Story on Page A1.)*

"I think he is so inhuman. It's too much," Jinggoy said.

"Yes, I visited my mother," the deposed President said in a phone call he made to the INQUIRER. "I had lunch with the whole family, my brothers and sisters and other relatives. My mother was so happy."

"There was an order from the Sandiganbayan," he said.

But Villa-Ignacio, who first blew the whistle on the Christmas visit, said there was no such order from the Sandiganbayan's special division, which is hearing the graft and plunder charges against Estrada.

"How could [permission] be given by the court when it was closed during the [Christmas] holiday?" Villa-Ignacio told the INQUIRER by phone. "As far as I recall, there was no such order in December."

To make sure, Villa-Ignacio had his people check the Sandiganbayan records; they found that the anti-graft court's last action in December concerning Estrada was to issue a resolution granting him his plea to go to the United States for surgery.

The resolution, issued on Dec. 23 and written by Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice and special division chair Minita Chico-Nazario, also stated that with the grant of Estrada's wish to go abroad, his request for a furlough from Christmas Day to New Year's Day was "mooted."

At the Wednesday hearing to determine whether contempt of court charges should be lodged against Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane and Sacramento, head of the PSPO, Villa-Ignacio also said that Estrada likewise visited his mother on New Year's Day.

He said such unauthorized forays outside Camp Capinpin were made on top of Estrada's alleged intermittent stay in his vacation estate across from the Army camp in Tanay, Rizal.

1 street away

Estrada said he stopped at his Polk Street residence because it was just "one street" away from his mother's house.

"Yes, I went to the house to get some clothes. But I did not sleep there," he said in Filipino.

He said that while he stayed long in his mother's house, he was in his own house for only about 10 minutes. He said he took some jackets because it was cold in Camp Capinpin.

"I am being attacked for passing by my house to get my clothes? How can they be so inhuman?" he said, directing his words to Villa-Ignacio and the latter's supposed sources.

He said he got permission to drop by his house by talking to his police guards and their superiors. *"Nakikiusap lang ako* (I merely made a request)," he said, admitting that the supposed court order was for him to visit his mother.

Estrada also earlier admitted that before he was driven to San Juan, he dropped by his rest house in Tanay to pick up some things.

"Why are they making a big fuss out of this?" he said of the furor generated by reports of his spending time in his rest house and even wandering out of Camp Capinpin without a court order.

In bigger trouble

Asked if they were aware of Estrada's trips or if there was a covering court order, both Renato Bocar and Ed Urieta, Sandiganbayan special division spokesperson and chief sheriff, respectively, replied in the negative.

"These are all unverified reports," said Bocar, who also heads the court's legal research and technical staff.

Bocar added that if Estrada indeed made the trips to San Juan, Ebdane, Sacramento and his subordinates would be in bigger trouble.

Villa-Ignacio said Sacramento could either have known of Estrada's forays out of Camp Capinpin or was clueless about it, having slept at the camp for only 11 nights in three months.

He recalled that during the Wednesday hearing, Sacramento appeared jittery and fumbled when asked to describe his sleeping quarters at the camp.

Sacramento initially claimed that he spent the night in the Army barracks. But Villa-Ignacio shot this down, telling him that officers did not usually sleep with their men.

"He could not even pinpoint where the officers' quarters are. He was always throwing his gaze at Ebdane and Chief Supt. Doroteo Reyes [the PNP chief legal counsel], as if asking for guidance," Villa-Ignacio said.

'Media ploy'

Senate President Franklin Drilon said Estrada's custodians, and not Ms Macapagal, should explain why the ex-President was able to leave his detention quarters.

Drilon said the inclusion of Ms Macapagal among the respondents of the criminal complaint filed Tuesday by lawyers and activists was "totally unfounded" and "part of the brickbats being thrown at her during this political season."

"There is absolutely no evidence that the President had any participation in whatever little privileges are being given to former President Estrada," Drilon told reporters.

He said the filing of the complaint against Ms Macapagal was nothing but a "media ploy" because, he pointed out, the people behind it knew that the latter was immune from suit during her term. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Avoid Erap, new guard detail told

By Christian V. Esguerra

AVOID him.

This, in essence, was the Philippine National Police leadership's directive to the new 15-man custodial unit guarding ex-President Joseph Estrada in Camp Capinpin.

Chief Supt. Rolando Sacramento, the man in charge of Estrada's overall security, briefed the new unit led by Senior Supt. Pedro Nicolas shortly after it arrived at the camp Tuesday morning, according to Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao, PNP information officer.

Two-hour briefing

Goltiao said that in the two-hour briefing, Sacramento "discouraged" the new guards from accepting either favor or gift from Estrada and advised them to minimize conversations with him.

The custodial unit will be replaced monthly to avoid familiarity, Goltiao told the INQUIRER.

"The bottom line is, we should be able to strictly implement the requirements of the Sandiganbayan," he said.

The PNP is apparently wary that the new guards might get disarmed by the ex-President widely known for his generosity. This angle is among those being pursued by the investigation ordered by PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

Up to the task

While the inquiry is being completed, the PNP leadership is confident that Nicolas and his men are up to the task.

"He has a very strong character; he's not one who easily gets star-struck," Goltiao said of Nicolas, Sacramento's chief of staff at the Eastern Police District where Goltiao once also served as deputy director for operations.

Nicolas is actually no stranger to Estrada. Or at least his followers.

As an EPD official, he helped contain thousands of Estrada supporters who initially camped out at the historic Edsa Shrine before storming Malacañang on May 1, 2001.

PRESIDENTIAL candidate Raul Roco shakes hands with disabled sweepstakes ticket vendor Leo Ubay-ubay at the Carmen Market in Cagayan de Oro City Thursday.

ERIK ARAZAS

PRESIDENT Macapagal campaigns in San Pedro, Laguna, Thursday. VAL HANDUMON

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Suspended BFP execs make plea

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman may have been misled when it placed two top Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) officials under preventive suspension.

This was the contention made by BFP Chief Francisco S. Senot and Senior Supt. Danilo Cabrera, BFP-NCR Fire Marshal, in a motion for reconsideration they filed with the Ombudsman.

In a statement issued yesterday, Senot and Cabrera claimed that "unfounded and perjurious narration of facts" could have misled the Ombudsman in suspending them from office for six months.

The suspension order stemmed from a complaint of harassment filed by Juliferd Hilay and Primo Arthur Cordeta VI, electrical inspector and stockman, respectively, of BFP, against Senot and Cabrera.

The complainants were material witnesses on "alleged ghost deliveries of office supplies, equipment, repair of vehicles, etc."

Hilay and Cordeta had claimed that they incurred the ire of BFP officials when they revealed the alleged anomalies in a complaint they filed.

They were reassigned to different posts in NCR, a move they claimed was a form of harassment.

In their motion for reconsideration, Senot and Cabrera said the transfer of posts of the complainants was part of the streamlining of personnel in the BFP-national office, by putting the right person in the right job.

As to the allegation of Hilay that he was dropped from the roll, Senot and Cabrera explained this was not so.

They explained that Regional Order No. CFI-2K-309-060 that dropped Hilay from the BFP roll of employees was nullified when he returned to work before the issuance of the order.

PASSENGERS of MRT show their bags for inspection by a member of the police Wednesday following the strike staged by security guards. JOAN BONDOC

Sitdown strike by guards fails to stop Metrorail runs

By Luige del Puerto

SECURITY guards of the Metro Rail Transit 3 went on strike yesterday, forcing the police to take over the security operations of the light rail system.

But the walkout failed to paralyze the operations of MRT-3, also known as Metrostar Express.

In their stead, policemen from the Regional Security Action Unit (RSAU) took over the job of checking the passengers' belongings, inspecting comfort rooms and patrolling the stations' premises.

The guards from the Vanguard Security Agency held a picket last week after their agency reportedly failed to pay them a month and 10 day's worth of salary.

The RSAU troopers said they have no qualms about their unexpected assignment, but many are sympathetic to the plight of the security guards.

"We are familiar with the routine security inspections, so this is not a problem," a trooper assigned at the MRT-Ortigas Station said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"But we don't want to be taking over the jobs of security guards for long. We hope this is resolved immediately because we understand their difficulty. Some of us have families too," the cop said.

Passengers, meanwhile, said the strike has not disrupted their routine.

Amy Antonio of Quezon City said the cops were polite, like the guards.

Terminated

The management of MRT said it would rely on the police reinforcements while on the lookout for a new security staff.

This developed after the MRT terminated the services of the Vanguard Security Agency because of the strike.

Mariano Gui, spokesperson for MRT general manager Roberto Lastimoso, assured the riding public that the Metrostar Express would be safe and secure under the watch of the PNP.

The MRT-3 had been identified as a potential target of terrorism and sabotage, and the government would not take its chances on a repeat of the Rizal Day bombing in December 2000, which hit the Light Rail Transit.

More than 50,000 people ride the Metrostar Express daily. At least four guards are posted at each of the 13 stations.

The guards claimed that the security agency has not paid their wages for more than a month. Gui said MRT-3 was not remiss in its payments to Vanguard.

"We are aware that we must keep a stringent security at MRT-3. The riding public has nothing to worry about because the government is committed to keep the railway facility secure," Gui said.

Lawmen hit on 'no plate' violations

By Tarra Quismundo

NO ONE to blame but lax law enforcers who choose to look the other way.

Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr. said this is why many vehicles without license plates are seen negotiating the city's major thoroughfares despite a traffic regulation that prevents them from doing so.

"Law enforcers are the most guilty of this violation, even more so than criminals," Atienza told the INQUIRER. "If you see one of these vehicles with no plates, chances are it belongs either to a criminal or a law enforcer," he said.

Atienza warned police officers and other law enforcers to abide by the laws they are supposed to implement. And once caught, law enforcers would suffer the same penalty as any motorist would.

Vehicles used by policemen even during surveillance operations should display the standard alphanumeric license plates, the mayor added.

The National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force, Department of Transportation and Communication, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, and the Philippine National Police began implementing the "no license, no travel" policy the other day.

Atienza said the policy could help in anti-crime efforts, as "plate-less" vehicles are often used in criminal activities.

Manila's traffic enforcers are also on the lookout for motorists who use personal license plates, including those that bear the titles "Councilor," "Mayor," "Press," or those that simply spell out the name of the car owner.

On March 15, traffic enforcers in the city would begin confiscating such license plates from motorists with vehicles displaying these plates. Motorists using personalized or "vanity" license plates are able to evade traffic regulations and the number coding scheme, Atienza noted.

Manila has an existing traffic regulation that prohibits the use of special license plates.

The use of commemorative license plates is also being discouraged as this is unnecessary, according to the mayor.

LPG refilling stations raided

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation have seized P15-million worth of refilling machines, gas tanks and vehicles from three refilling stations allegedly engaged in the illegal trading of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

The seizures were made during simultaneous raids conducted by the NBI on the Republic Gas Corporation and the Capitol Allied Trading and Transporting, Inc. in Malabon, and the PR I Gas Inc. in Navotas.

The raid was conducted by the NBI's Field Operations Division based on the complaints of Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation, Petron Gasul Corporation and Total Philippines Corp.

The NBI's FOD headed by lawyer Manuel Dionisio then conducted surveillance operations and pinpointed the three stores. *Leila B. Salaverria*

METROBRIEFS

2 women slain

TWO WOMEN were shot dead by three men the other night in Binangonan, Rizal, the police said. Lerma Anore, 32, of Barangay Balig, died while undergoing treatment at the Queen Mary Hospital in Cardona, Rizal. Her friend, Lorna Aragones, 34, of Barangay Libis, succumbed hours later in the same hospital. Witnesses said they saw one of the suspects talking to the victims, who were on a motorcycle, on Liwanag Street near the town's public market around 7 p.m. Wednesday. "It emerged that the suspect and the victims were arguing over something," said SPO1 Joaquin Arcilla. Arcilla said while they were arguing, the second suspect approached from behind and without a word, shot the women. The suspects then took away the victims' mobile phone and handbag, which contained only coins. *Luige del Puerto*

Worker stabbed

A CONSTRUCTION worker lost his life the other day in Tondo for allegedly failing to pay for the P2 worth of fishball that he ate before going home. Police identified the fatality as Ruben Tamase, 41. He sustained several stab wounds inflicted allegedly by Elmer Yesea, 26, a fishball vendor. Investigation showed that the two engaged in a heated argument after Tamase failed to pay P2 for the fishball he ate. Yesea drew a knife and stabbed Tamase. The suspect was nabbed by the police later. *Leila Salaverria*

'No plate, no travel' rule exempts bikes

By Margaux Ortiz

MOTORCYCLES are temporarily exempted from the "no plate, no travel" policy, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

While other public and private vehicles are required to obtain license plates within 15 days, motorcycles are exempted from the policy until April, MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said yesterday.

He said the Land Transportation Office has yet to cope with the making and issuance of license plates for motorcycles.

Vergel de Dios, however, stressed that motorcycle riders should be able to show registration papers to traffic enforcers to avoid being impounded.

According to the MMDA Metrobase, vehicles with no license plates were told to pull over and asked to present their registration papers.

Motorists who failed to produce the official receipt or certificate of registration, delivery receipt or sales invoice were immediately impounded.

Owners of impounded vehicles face a P5,000 fine plus surcharges.

Motorists who had the required documents were warned and told to get a license plate within 15 days.

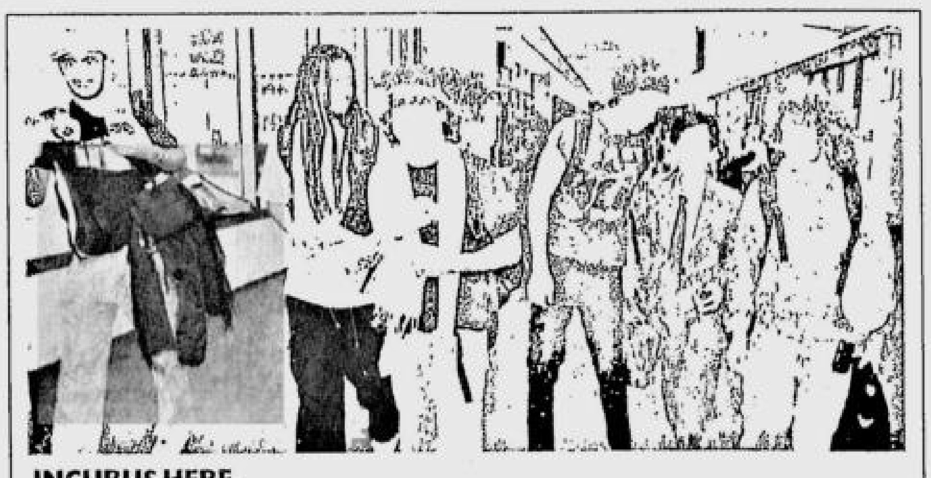
Metrobase officials also said that conduction stickers were only valid for a week.

Grace Tica; 68

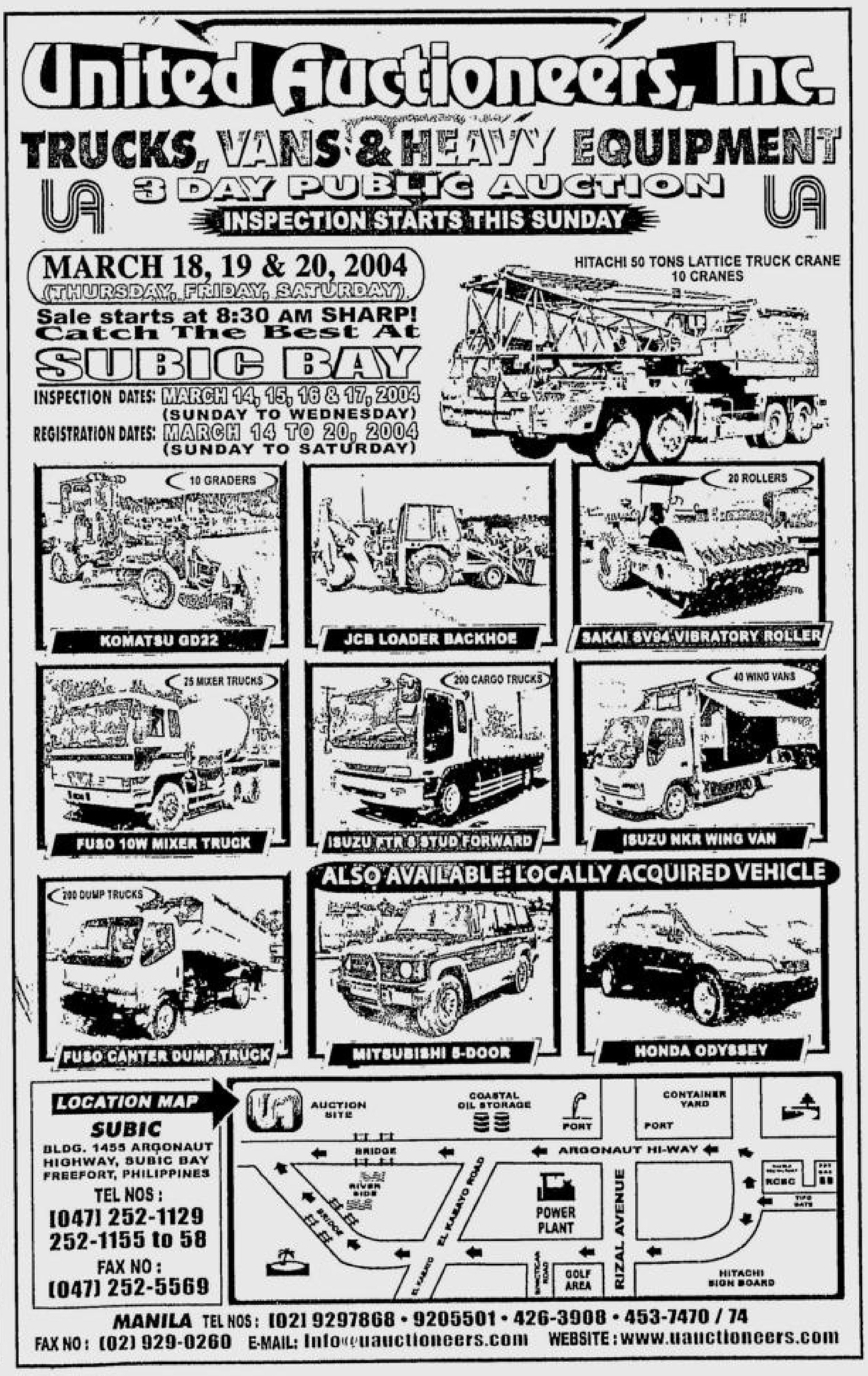
GRACE Ballon Tica, wife of International Baptist Missionary Fellowship president Rev. Gavino Tica, died on March 10. She was 68.

She is survived by her husband and children Nathaniel and Sheila, Florence and Edward, James Lee and Issa, and grandchildren.

Her body lies at the International Baptist Church at 477 Barangka Drive, Mandaluyong City. Daily necrological services will be held at 7 p.m. Interment will be announced later.



INCUBUS HERE
Members of superband Incubus walk toward the arrival hall of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Wednesday. The band is on the 3rd leg of their "A Crow Left Of The Murder Asian Tour 2004." They will perform tonight at the Cultural Center of the Philippines open grounds. "Incubus Live In Manila" is presented by Smart Buddy, LoneStar Ultra and Jag Jeans. ROGER MARGALLO



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METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

A TRAFFIC enforcer directs traffic flow at a U-turn slot along Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City, one of the places where accidents have been reported. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

'Dangerous' U-turns

MMDA raps careless drivers for accidents

By Margaux Ortiz

CARELESS motorists with bad driving habits contribute to the rising incidence of accidents on the clearways.

This is according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority that said although the U-turn slots it installed are motorist-friendly, some drivers using the clearway scheme overtake or make turns at the wrong time, or drive beyond the speed limit.

"It is mainly driver error that cause minor accidents in areas where the scheme is implemented," Herminio Naval of the MMDA Road Safety Unit told the INQUIRER.

The Unit has recorded five non-fatal accidents in clearway scheme areas from December 2003 to February 2004. On the other hand, the Traffic Enforcement Group, reported 243 minor accidents involving damages to vehicles during the same period.

Most of the accidents took place in the Central District, where Quezon Avenue, Edsa, Commonwealth Avenue, Katipunan Avenue and C-5 are located.

Naval said the MMDA made sure that the width of the "protected and safe" U-turn slots are motorist-friendly. The agency has also attached reflectors to the concrete barriers used for the slots, he stressed.

The MMDA official suggested that motorists slow down while maneuvering within the U-turn slots. Jeepneys and trucks should stay in the slot's outer lane, while cars should stick to the inner lane, he said.

In a letter to the INQUIRER, Victoria Segovia of the Miriam College Environmental Studies Institute said the U-turn scheme on Katipunan is "a greater threat to motorists and pedestrians alike," with 23 vehicular accidents reported since the opening of the U-turn slots on Feb. 2.

Segovia said students, employees and residents take great risks crossing the avenue.

"The U-turn slots do not adequately address the situation resulting from speeding vehicles coming down from the flyover that suddenly meet with the slow moving vehicles at the U-turn slots," she said.

Fire destroys yacht

By Tarra Quismundo

THE MIDDLE of the Manila Bay was a scene of a blaze as the sun set yesterday.

At 5:40 p.m., fire broke out in a luxury yacht named "Lady Tring" docked in deep waters away from the other boats docked at the Manila Yacht Club in Ermita, Manila.

In less than an hour, the luxury yacht that belonged to a certain Mr. Romualdez was destroyed, police said.

Rafael Neri of the Western Police District Tactical Operations Center said the yacht club's security guard refused to give the first name of the yacht's owner, saying it was confidential.

As of press time, arson investigators have yet to determine the damages caused by the fire. But Neri said such yachts could easily cost millions of pesos.

Man picks fruits, is electrocuted

BE CAREFUL in picking fruits.

A man was electrocuted in Malabon City the other day after the steel pipe he used in picking some mangoes touched a power cable.

Rey Isaal, 28, just wanted to get some mangoes for his pregnant wife at the compound of his employer, police said.

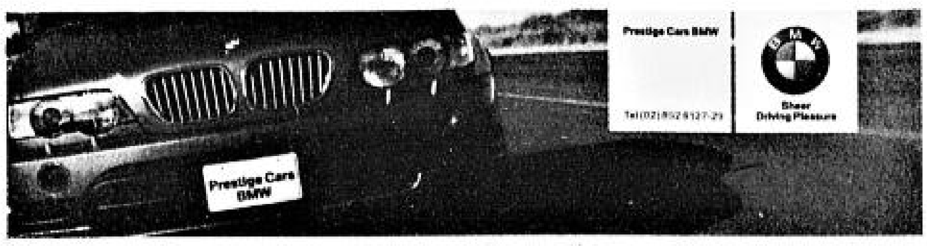
He took a steel pipe and started getting mangoes. The pipe touched a high tension wire. He was brought to the hospital where he was declared dead on arrival.

Edson Tandoc Jr.

SUERTRES
(In exact order) 3 4 3

SIX DIGIT (In exact order)
2 3 9 6 9 6

SUPERLOTTO 6/49
10 18 32 45 46 49



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Dapat bang pagdudahan ang Comelec?

Ang sagot nina Comelec chairman Benjamin Abalos and Rufus Rodriguez, legal counsel ng Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. Pagkatapos: Ano ba ang hinahanap ng mga presidential candidates sa mga proxy nila? Nakausap ng InqTV sina Richard Gomez, Eddie Garcia at Jolina Magdangal. Lahat ng ito, ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa InqTV on ABC-5.

ABC

SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Greatest Games-Wizards vs Sixers (4/16/03); 8:30 a.m. (r-midnight); Solar Sports—Michael Jordan makes his historic final appearance as Washington closed out their season in Philadelphia.

NBA-Hornets vs Rockets; 8:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Star Sports; Mavs vs Kings; 11 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—New Orleans will go all out to sting Houston while expect a high-octane scoring affair when rivals Dallas and Sacramento duel at the Arco Arena.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

FRIDAY,
MARCH 12, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

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BATAAN TIFF

Kings inflict Express 3rd straight loss

GAMES TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:10 p.m. —Shell vs Alaska
6:30 p.m. —Purefoods vs Sta. Lucia

BALANGA, Bataan—The showtime came rather late, but it was worth all the wait.

Mark Caguioa, nicknamed the Spark for his explosive ways, erupted for 13 points in the fourth period last night as Barangay Ginebra subdued FedEx, 102-93, in the PBA Fiesta Conference at the Bataan People's Center here.

Caguioa, who had only nine points in the first three periods, combined with Eric Menk and Rodney Santos in boosting the Gin Kings ahead to stay with barely three minutes remaining.

He finished with 22 points behind Menk's game-high 25 as the Kings improved to 3-1 in a tie with idle Talk N Text.

To the frustration of the predominantly Ginebra crowd, FedEx held its own against the Gin Kings only to lose steam at the end.

Wynne Arboleda kept FedEx in the fight for the last time with a jumper, 87-87, but failed to save the Express from absorbing their third straight loss.

Menk, cheered on by his parents, sank a fadeaway shot and Santos answered a Ren Ren Ritualo miss with a 12-footer as Ginebra surged ahead, 93-87, 53 ticks left.

George Reese struggled at the start, but recovered his poise in the final half as he scored 20 points, including a running dunk which gave the Kings a 99-89 lead, 20 seconds left.

The Express took a 48-37 lead at halftime as the Gin Kings made only 15 points from a 22-22 deadlock at the end of the first period.

But Ginebra returned to outscore FedEx in the third period, 31-20, to forge a 31-31 tie going into the last quarter as Reese and Romel Adducul each hit eight points for the Gin Kings.

It was a tight contest from there until Caguioa exploded when it counted most.

Scores:

GINEBRA 102—Menk 25, Caguioa 22, Reese 20, Adducul 14, Seigle 8, Santos 7, Helterbrand 5, Valenzuela 1, Davit 0, Noble 0, Salvacion 0.

FEDEX 93—Meneses 19, Jefferson 18, Arboleda 17, Ritualo 12, Ferriols 9, Yao 8, De Ocampo 3, Pingris 3, Bernardo 2, Gonzales 2, Billones 0, Rodriguez 0.

Quarters: 22-22, 48-37, 58-68, 102-93

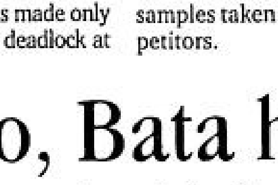
4 Viets to lose SEAG medals

HANOI—Vietnam's sports authorities said Thursday four Vietnamese athletes would be stripped of the medals they won at December's Southeast Asian Games after testing positive for banned substances.

Laboratory tests in Beijing detected traces of stanozol and testosterone, which are banned under International Olympic Committee (IOC) rules, in urine samples taken from the four competitors.

AFP

Django, Bata head Asian 9-ball field



REYES: RP spearhead

FILIPINOS Francisco "Django" Bustamante, currently the world's No. 1 player, and Efren "Bata" Reyes, a Hall of Fame inductee, head a 32-man field in the second leg of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour this weekend at the Nguyen Du Sports Hall in Ho Chi Minh City.

Also entered in the tournament serving as a qualifier for the World Pool Championships are six of the world's top 50 players.

In the Singapore leg two weeks ago, Chinese Taipei's Yang Ching Shun yielded his title to Reyes, who also topped the Philippine leg last year. The Magician beat his compatriot Warren Kiamco, 11-4, in the final, while Kiamco set a Tour record for making the final for the third consecutive Tour leg.

A purse of $50,000 will be up for grabs this weekend and in each subsequent stop of the San Miguel Asian 9-Ball Tour: Hong Kong (April 17-18), Taipei (May 7-9) and Manila (May 29-30).

All action will be telecast live on STAR Sports at 7 p.m. on March 13 and at 4:30 p.m. on March 14.

Heroes of the game like former world champions Reyes and Chao Fong-Pang (1993 & 2000) of Chinese Taipei will definitely be the players to beat in Vietnam.

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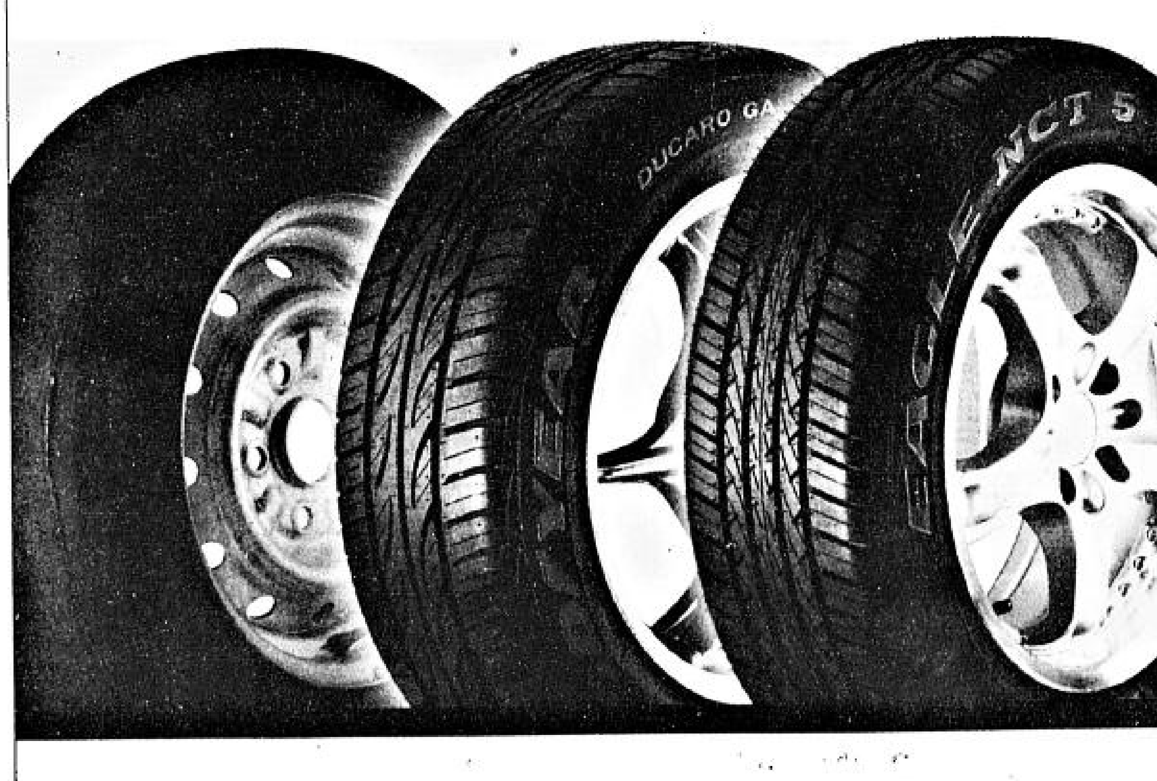

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185/65R14	1,988	195/55R15	2,766
195/65R15	2,236	205/65R15	2,640
205/65R15	2,361	195/60R14	2,113
185/60R14	1,852	185/70R14	1,967
195/60R15	2,239	185/65R15	2,063
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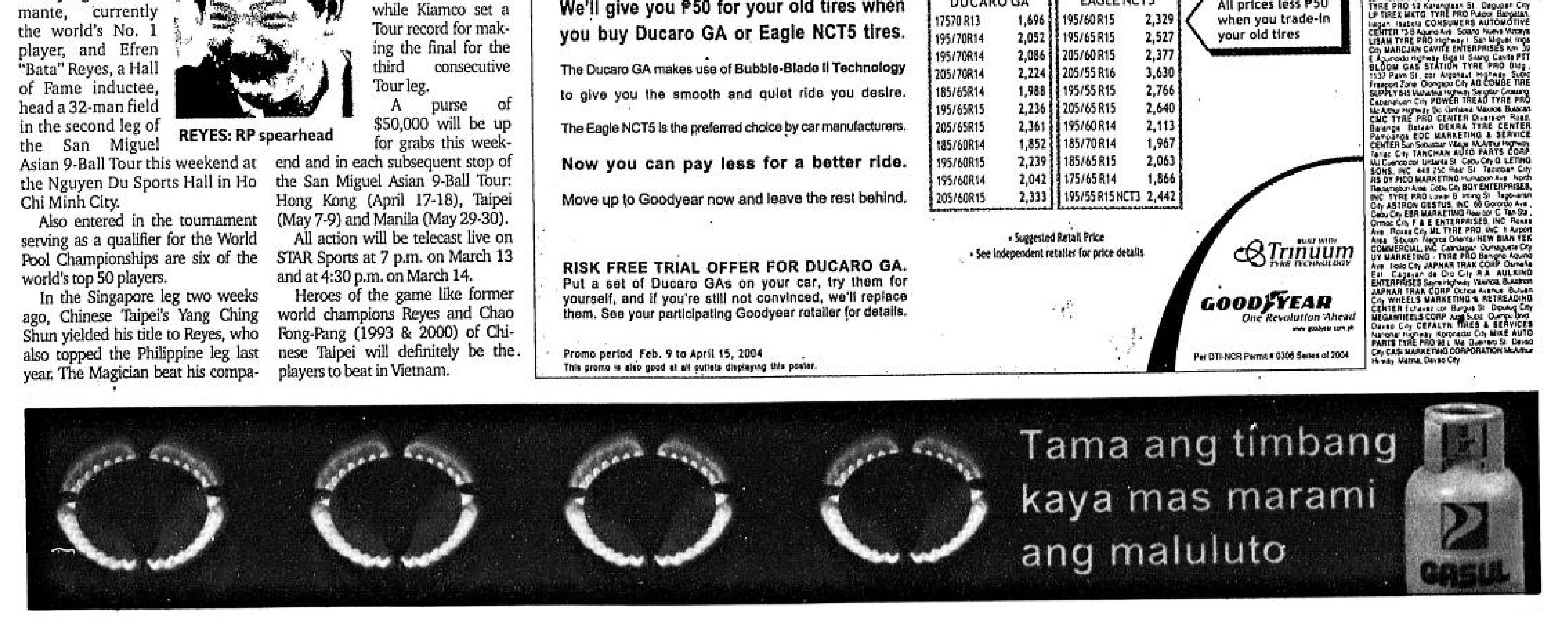

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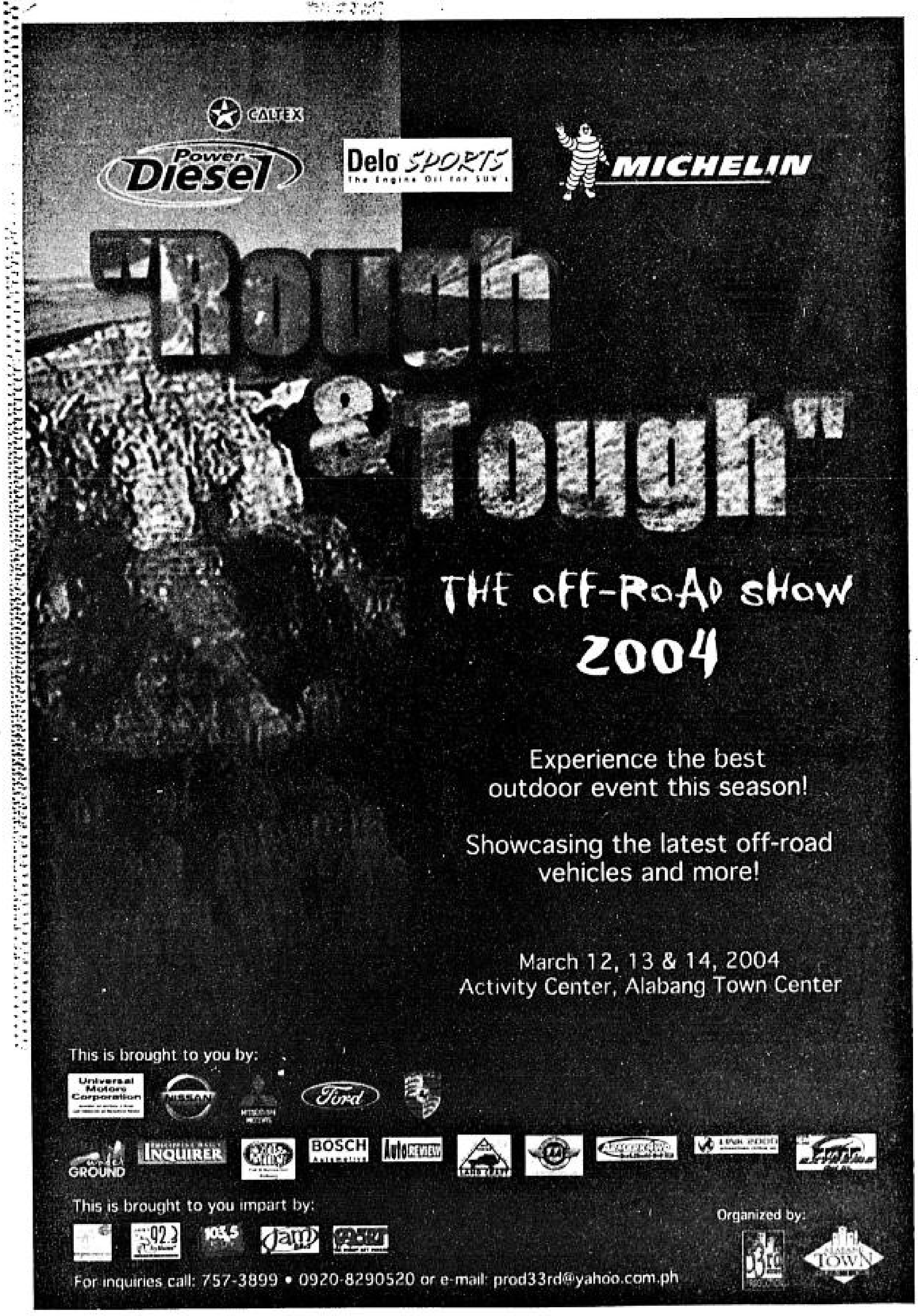
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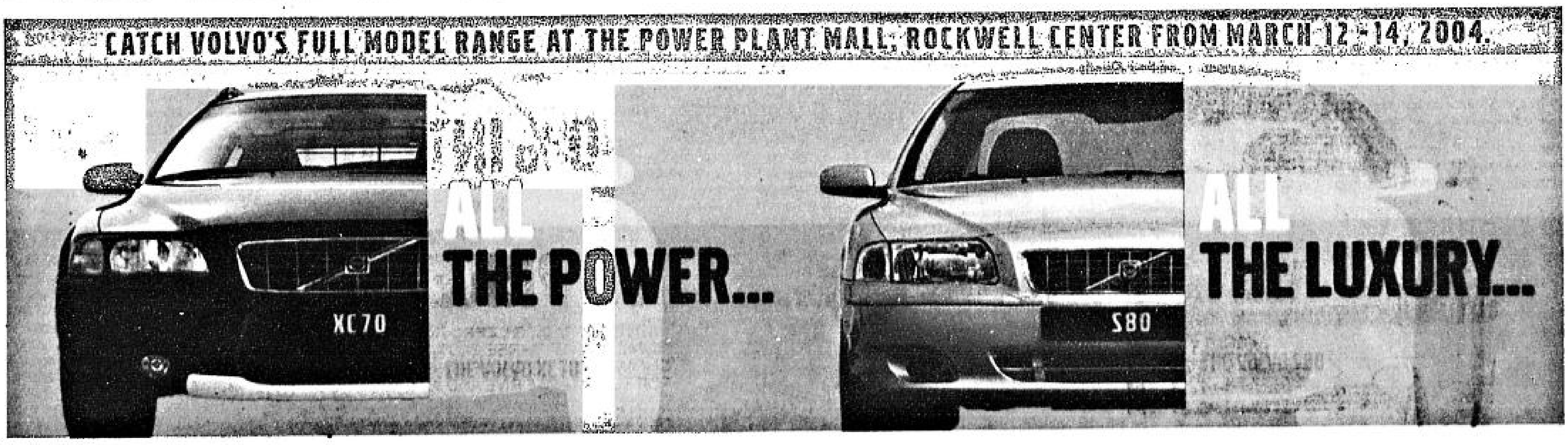
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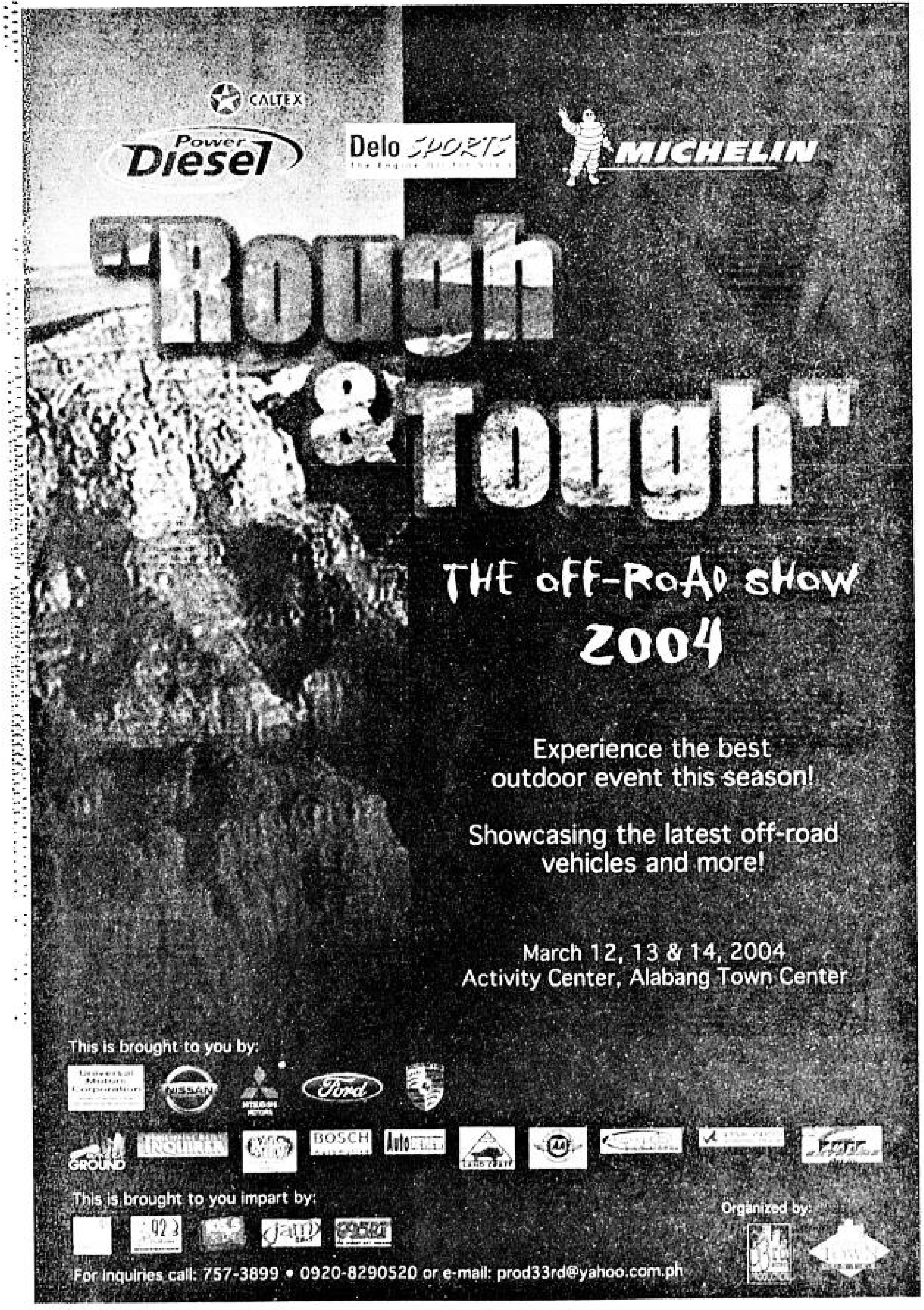

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SOUTHERN LADIES OPEN

Roberto pulls away from Yao by 6

ROBERTO: Headed for victory. PDI PHOTO

BACOLOD—Lora Roberto threatened to turn the 41st Southern Ladies Open Golf Championships into her own private show when she shot 54 points yesterday to pull away from Aileen Rose Yao by six points in the championship division at the Bacolod Golf and Country Club at Hacienda Binitin in Murcia here.

Starting the round with a shaky one-point edge, Roberto made a couple of 27s under the Molave scoring system, even par in medal play, as the Southwoods bet posted a 36-hole aggregate of 109, counting her first-round 55.

Yao failed to sustain her solid 54 in the first day, faltering with 49 points on nines of 23-26. She remained second with 103, with one round left in the 54-hole tournament.

With Carmelette Villaroman and Jocel Pagunsan both tumbling down with 48 and 47 points, respectively, after opening with 52s, Leanna Farrales of Wack Wack made her move by churning out 53 points to catch Southwoods' Tracy Locsin, who shot 51, for third with 101.

Barring any disaster and another major foldup like the one she did in the RP Ladies Open last January, Roberto seems set to clinch the crown unopposed in this event conducted by the National Golf Association of the Philippines.

Mencie Millonado remained on top in Class A with 82 points after a 38 but the Wack Wack standout saw her overnight four-point lead reduced to just one. Negros' Jocelyn Garcia, Shiela Dolosa of Bacolod and Hilda Badong of Riviera shot identical 41s to close in with 81 points.

Beth Menchavez, another bet from Riviera, bounced back from a mediocre 36 with 40 points, although she remained six points off the pace with 76.

In Class B, Maribel Kawsek of Wack Wack seized control with a 72 after a 38 for a one-point lead over teammate Eloisa Campos, who had a 71 after a 37 in this event sponsored by DHL Worldwide Express, WWW Express, Petron Corp., Philippine Sports Commission, Gopez Corp., Sugarland Hotel, Directories Philippines Corp., Hans Brumann Jeweller, Casino Filipino Hotel, Mitsubishi Motors, Vice Admiral Luisito Fernandez, Bredco, Nestlé Waters Phils. Inc. and Mizuno.

Casas, Rosales top favorites in TCC Invitational

DEFENDING champion Cassius Casas and Gerald Rosales try to atone for their shock failure to make the cut in their last tournament when they lead the entries for the P3.85-million The Country Club Invitational golf championship starting March 18 at The Country Club course inside the Canlubang Estate in Laguna.

CASAS PDI PHOTO

ROSALES PDI PHOTO

Casas and Rosales, two of the big names who failed to make it to the weekend round of the recent Philippine Open, are expected to redeem themselves in the chase for the whopping top prize of P1.1 million.

The biggest local pro event outside of the RP Open this year is sponsored by the Razon family in cooperation with The Country Club.

"I'll do my best to defend my crown. But I expect a tough challenge from the rest of the field because the prizes are really big," said Casas, who won the inaugural staging last year by four strokes over Benjie Magada and Antonio Lascuña.

The organizing Videocom yesterday announced that invitations to the event are now ready for pickup at the Videocom office at S-18 Sunvar Plaza, Pasay Road corner Amorsolo St., San Lorenzo Village in Makati.

The top 21 finishers in last year's inaugurals have been given automatic slots with the rest of the elite 40-player field tapped by the sponsors headed by Enrique K. Razon Jr., who put up the tournament last year to honor the memory of his father, Don Pocholo, an avid golfer like him.

Organizers are also hoping that the invitation extended to the country's top player who stormed out of the RP Open, Frankie Miñoza, will be answered.

Aside from Casas, Rosales, Magada and Tony Lascuña, other notables invited to the four-day event are Cesar Ababa, Rey Alit, Eddie Bagtas, Ramil Bisera, Dan Cruz, Rodrigo Cuello, Cookie La'O, Robert Pactolerin, Rey Pagunsan, Mars Pucay, Angelo Que, Elmer Salvador, Ruben Sasutil, Richard Sinfuego and Danny Zarate.

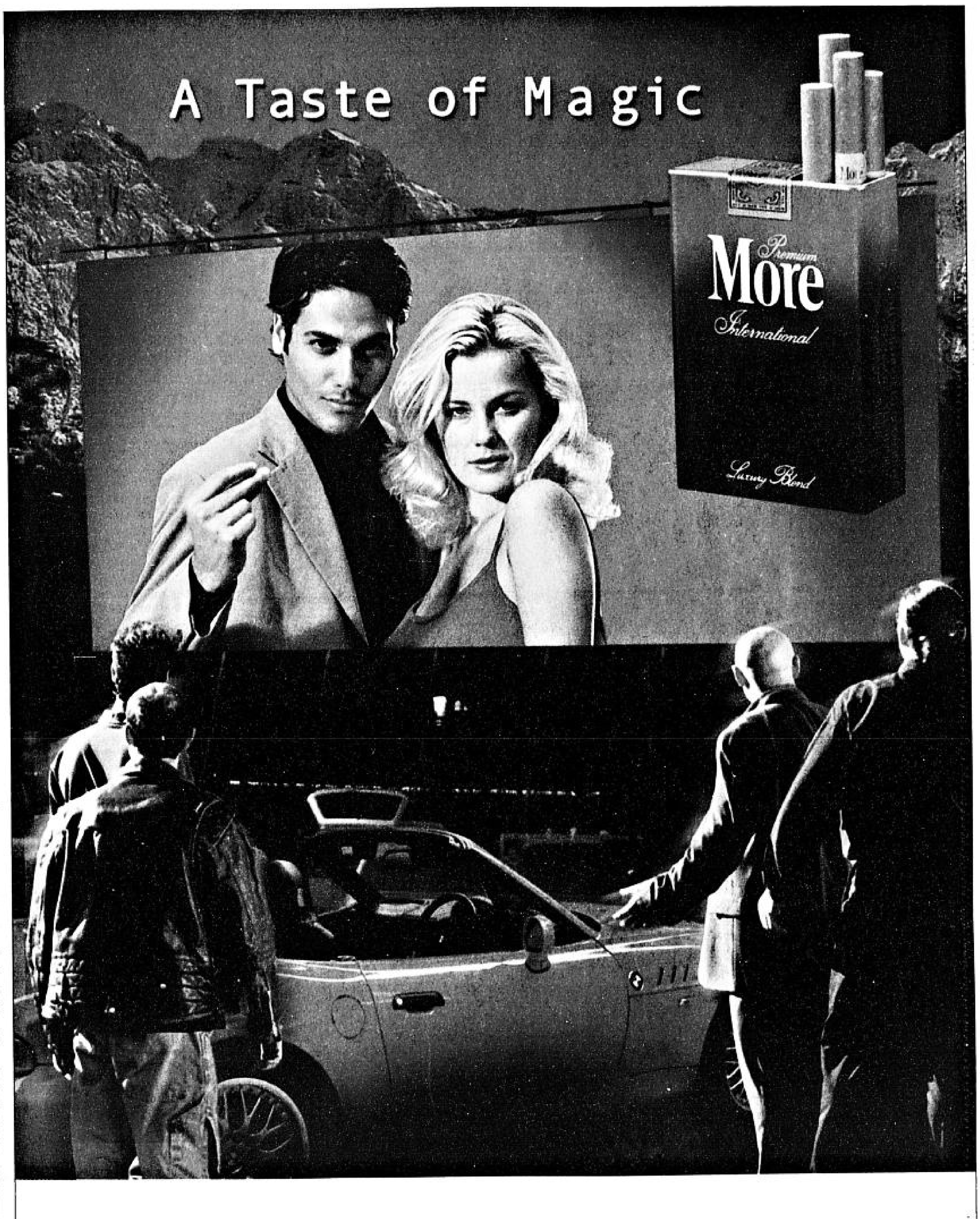
PAF, Peter Lee fives win NBDL openers

Games March 15 *(UM Gym)*
5 p.m.—PAF vs MICTS Transport
6:30 p.m.—Wangs vs Taal Cooking Oil

AIR FORCE and Peter Lee's Hong Kong Tea House cagers scored contrasting victories Wednesday at the start of the National Basketball Development League tournament at the UM gym.

The airmen crushed MLQU Au Beau, 118-82, while HK Tea House subdued MICTS Transport, 86-79.

Action in the tourney organized by Ted Magno with Maj. Bobby Royeca as commissioner resumes on Monday, March 15, with another doubleheader at the UM gym.



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The Mindanao squads are Ateneo de Davao, Davao Doctors College, Holy Cross of Davao, Mindanao State University, Misamis University, University of Mindanao, University of Mindanao-Tagum, Western Mindanao State University and Xavier University.

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"Definitely, these are two riders that Aguilar shouldn't take lightly. Both won against Aguilar in some of the races and they're all out to wrest the crown and glory from the Philippines," said FIM president for Asia Macky Carapiet.

Four other Asian champions—China's Xu Wen Min, Thailand's Chakrit Rungsuwan, Malaysia's Haslizam and India's Chika Vijayakumar—will surely make it a once-in-a-lifetime spectacle for avid motocross enthusiasts.

The event is sponsored by the City of Puerto Princesa, Dusit Hotel Nikko, The Legend Hotel-Palawan, Philippine Airlines, Bridgestone, Cebu Pacific, What's on & Expat, Oakley, Polysport, Triplex, Highland Products, Yehey.Com, ABC-5's Speed, Negros Navigation, www.motorcyclephilippines.com, the Philippine Sports Commission and the Department of Tourism.

The motocross spectacle, which will be aired over Star Sports and ESPN, is actually Round 2 of the FIM Asian series, which brings together the top national riders from 10 nations in eight action-filled legs held around the Asian continent.

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"He has shown no leadership qualities and proved himself incompetent," said Andrada of Dayrit, whom he is expected to challenge during the POC presidential election in August.

Ironically, Andrada and Dayrit, along with Go Teng Kok of athletics, were old friends who worked together to oust Cristy Ramos-Jalasco from the POC presidency in the '80s.

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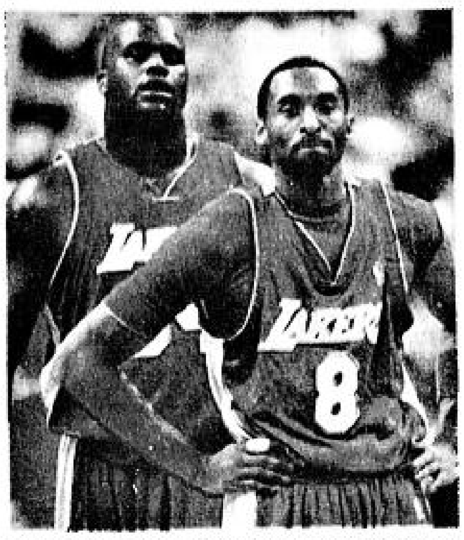
Magic cast spell on Wizards as McGrady fires record 62



LAKERS Shaquille O'Neal (left) and Kobe Bryant watch the Celtics take a free throw in their NBA game won by the Lakers, 117-109. REUTERS

ORLANDO, Florida—Tracy McGrady scored a team-record 62 points Wednesday, becoming just the third NBA player in the past 12 years to reach the total, in the Orlando Magic's 108-99 victory over the Washington Wizards.

McGrady, who had 55 points in the final three periods, broke Shaquille O'Neal's team record of 53 points set against Minnesota in 1994. It was the league's first 60-point game since O'Neal had 61 for the Lakers against the Los Angeles Clippers on March 6, 2000.

"I really didn't enjoy it, but I should have," McGrady said. "I couldn't get into it because of the record we have, the fact we're not going nowhere after the regular season—it's just frustrating."

In the past 12 years, only David Robinson (71 vs the Clippers on April 24, 1994) and Michael Jordan (63 vs Orlando on Jan. 16, 1993) have scored as least 62 points in a game.

McGrady shot 20-for-37 from the field, including 5-for-14 from 3-point range, and made 17 of 26 free throws in 46 minutes. He also had 10 rebounds and five assists.

"This might be a good place for us to start building momentum for next season," Magic coach Johnny Davis said. "That was a great individual performance by an amazing basketball player, and the icing on the cake is that we won the game."

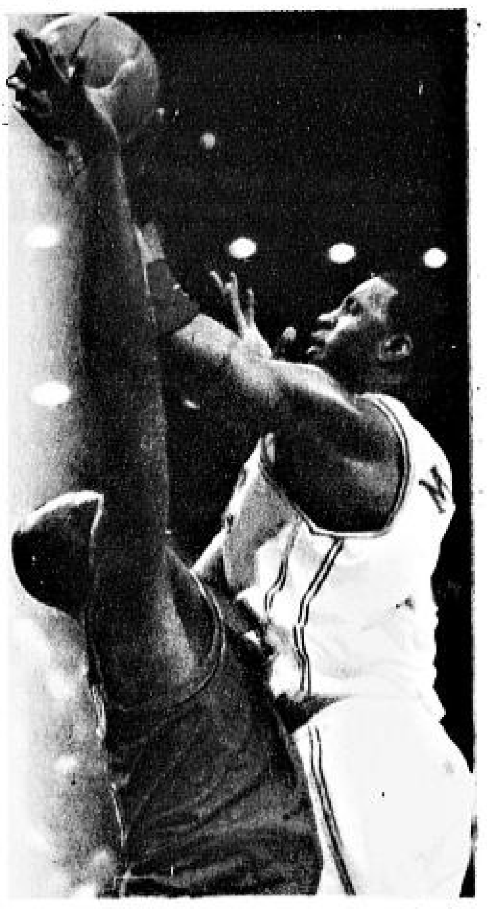
McGrady's previous career-high was 52 points against Chicago on Feb. 21, 2003.

In Toronto, Zydrunas Ilgauskas scored 30 points as Cleveland beat Toronto to win its fifth successive game—its longest winning streak in four years.

Carlos Boozer added 11 points and 13 rebounds for the Cavaliers, who hadn't won five in a row since December 2000. Cleveland won its 11th road game, its most since 1997-98—the last time the Cavs made the playoffs.

LeBron James added 14 points as Cleveland moved two games ahead of Toronto in the Eastern Conference playoff race. The Cavaliers have won 14 of their past 18 games against Eastern opponents. *AP*

Complete results: LA Lakers 117, Boston 109; Orlando 108, Washington 99; Cleveland 106, Toronto 92; New Jersey 98, Denver 97; Detroit 98, Chicago 65; New Orleans 95, Miami 84; Milwaukee 94, Atlanta 80; San Antonio 108, LA Clippers 90; Utah 91, Golden State 77; Portland 92, Minnesota 79.



MCGRADY (right) shoots over Wizards' Brendan Haywood on Wednesday. AP

Prosecutors take Bryant rape charge to high court

DENVER—Prosecutors have taken the Kobe Bryant case to the Colorado Supreme Court, saying the judge should not have granted a hearing on the sexual history of the woman accusing the NBA star of rape.

At the very least, defense attorneys should be limited in what they can ask the 19-year-old alleged victim, prosecutors said in an appeal filed late Tuesday.

District Attorney Mark Hurlbert said if the hearing is allowed to continue as scheduled March 24-25, the woman will suffer irreparable harm by being forced to testify about private matters protected under the state's rape-shield law. The law generally bars using the sexual history of alleged victims in court.

The high court could issue a decision as early as Thursday, prosecution spokeswoman Krista Flannigan said.

Bryant faces four years to life in prison or 20 years to life on probation if convicted of felony sexual assault. The Los Angeles Lakers star has said he and the woman had consensual sex last June at the Vail-area hotel where she worked.

The woman is scheduled to testify behind closed doors about her sexual activities from the summer of 2002 to August 2003, Hurlbert said.

Defense attorneys say the information is important because it would show a "plan" to have sex with Bryant, would affect the credibility of the woman and other witnesses, and could show the woman's injuries might have been caused by another sexual partner.

The prosecution says the information is irrelevant, but state District Judge Terry Ruckriegle denied prosecutors' requests to halt the hearing and bar detailed questioning.

Hurlbert said defense questioning should be limited to the three days surrounding the alleged assault and to the source of semen found in the underwear she wore to a hospital examination the following day. Authorities have said the semen was not Bryant's. *AP*

Tyson wants China fight for $3 million

BEIJING—Former world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson wants to box in China, but finding a $3 million appearance fee remains the key issue in negotiations, a Beijing promoter said Thursday.

"The key to bringing this off is money. If we have enough money everything will go smoothly," Zhang Heng, director of the competition center of the Beijing sports bureau, told AFP.

Preliminary talks between Tyson's people and Beijing sports authorities have been held in the capital with each side basically agreeing on an October fight with a yet unnamed opponent to be preceded by a promotional tour in June, Zhang said.

"They've come here to talk. Tyson has also signed a letter, but things are still in the preliminary stage. The Tyson people don't want to talk to the press at this time," Zhang said.

If a Beijing fight materializes, it would become the first-ever major heavyweight boxing match in China.

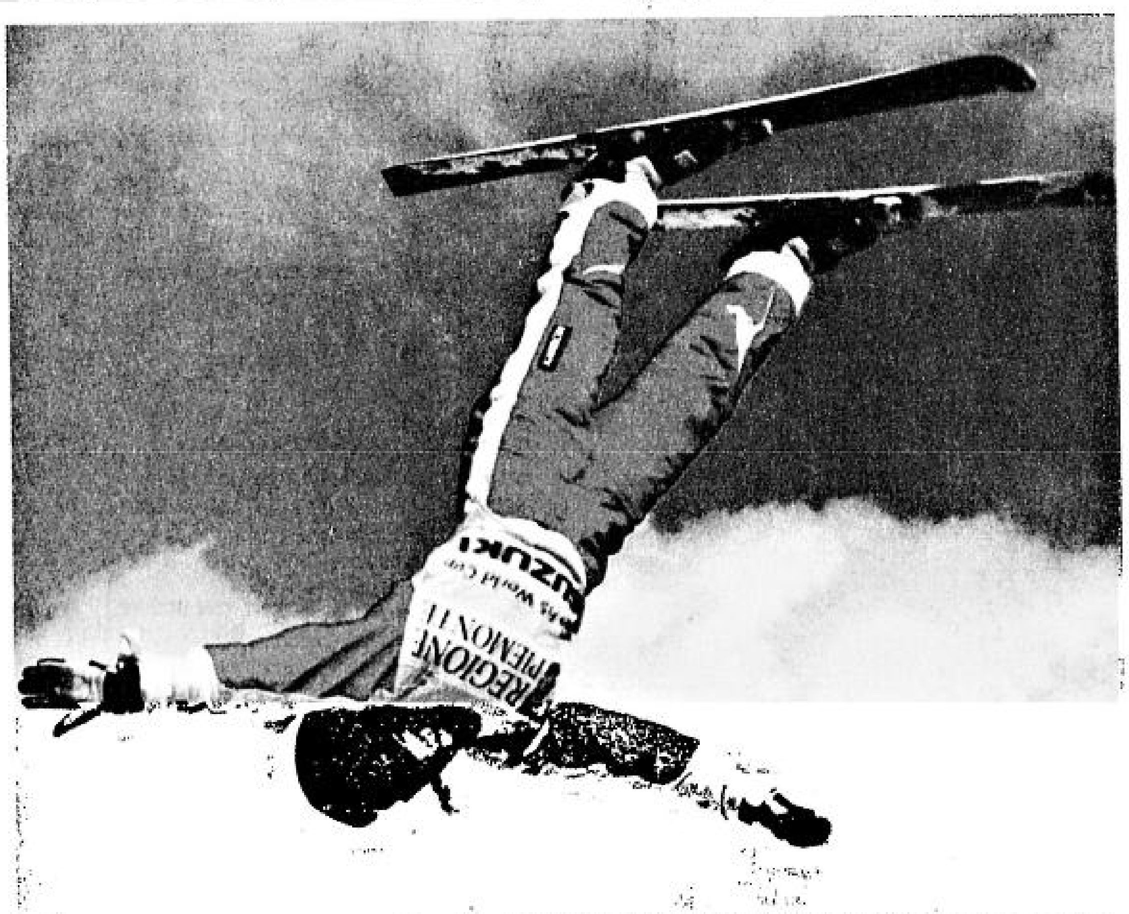
Flamboyant American boxing promoter Don King tried to organize a "Brawl at the Wall" heavyweight title fight between Evander Holyfield and John Ruiz in Beijing in 2001, but due to difficulties in raising cash and injuries the fight was repeatedly postponed.

In the end, the Beijing venue was scrapped altogether and the fight was held in the United States.

Tyson, 37, retains a high level of interest in China's sports world, not only because of his once-devastating fighting skills, but also for his bad boy image and a prominent tattoo of the late Chinese revolutionary Mao Zedong on his arm.

He is reportedly in financial trouble and last month reunited with his former manager Shelly Finkel in an effort to return to the boxing ring. No opponent was mentioned.

His last fight was more than a year ago when he beat Clifford Etienne in 49 seconds.



UP, UP AND AWAY
Australia's Alisa Camplin in action to win the final aerials event at the Freestyle World Cup in Sauze d'Oulx, northern Italy, Wednesday. AP

Parry seeks 2nd victory in Honda tilt

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Florida—Australian Craig Parry, who won a playoff at last week's Ford Championship in scintillating style, seeks to keep the momentum going Thursday when the $5 million Honda Classic begins.

Parry has been besieged with congratulatory wishes from friends after he holed a six-iron from 176 yards to win a playoff over American Scott Verplank on Sunday.

"Anyone who called was yahooing on the phone and jumping up and down," Parry said. "I had 22 messages in the first hour. It was amazing. And no one knows my phone number." Parry's dramatic shot is destined to be shown on golf's highlight reels for years to come, but he appears uncomfortable with the praise.

"There's a few people who said it was the best shot they have ever seen under such pressure," Parry conceded. "It's for other people to talk about. As far as I'm concerned, I was fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time." The victory came in Parry's first start of the year on the US Tour, and it quickly moved him to 13th on the money list.

The defending champion is Justin Leonard, who shot a five-under-par 67 in the final round to post a one-stroke win over Chad Campbell and Davis Love. *AFP*

CLEARED
Britain's Greg Rusedski was cleared of doping charges Wednesday, becoming the eighth male tennis player exonerated after taking supplements supplied by the game's governing body. AP

Top Athens Olympics official resigns after party loses power

ATHENS—Greece's general secretary for the Athens Olympics has resigned in the first departure of a top official since a new government took power, officials said on Thursday.

Officials said Costas Kartalis, who was a government official and third in command for the Games organization as well as a member of the socialist party that lost power in Sunday's elections, resigned despite pleas from new Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis to remain in his post for the Aug. 13-29 Games.

"The Prime Minister asked him to stay on but Mr. Kartalis resigned on Wednesday afternoon," an official told Reuters.

Working from the culture ministry, Kartalis was in charge of day-to-day operations and behind only Games chief Gianna Angelopoulos and the country's culture minister in the Games hierarchy.

The officials said Kartalis left because he was uneasy about working for the new government, formed by the conservative New Democracy party.

"It would be difficult for him now to pick up the phone and pressure ministers, since he would be a socialist in a conservative government," an ATHOC source said.

"His executive powers would now be gone and he would be only offering advice, so the resignation is not really a surprise." Kartalis took over as general secretary in 1999 when the then ruling socialists were struggling to kickstart Games preparations after losing two years to political infighting.

Karamanlis, who swept to power on Sunday ending 11 years of socialist rule, made retaining top Olympic officials one of his first promises on his election.

In a sign that he is now personally in charge of the troubled Games, Karamanlis has taken over the Culture Ministry, which supervises Olympic preparations. *Reuters*

Lightning kills 18-year-old Chinese soccer player

SINGAPORE—Lightning struck and killed a teenage Chinese player during training with his Singapore S-League club Sinchi FC, local media reported on Thursday.

Rescue workers pronounced 18-year-old Jiang Tao dead about 10 minutes after the bolt struck the pitch, the Straits Times said.

"There was a light drizzle, dark skies, but no thunder or lightning. Suddenly, I heard the roar of thunder and then saw a lightning bolt hit the ground behind me," said coach K. Jamaludeen, who was standing near the player.

"The next thing I knew, the boy had collapsed. There was smoke coming from the field," he said.

China's Sinchi joined the S-League last year as the first professional Chinese club to compete full-time outside the mainland.

"I was in the middle of the field and had stopped training for a while to give the players instructions," said Jamaludeen, who was coaching Sinchi for the first time.

Jiang, a defender, had played with the club for two years.

Sudden rain storms and lightning are common in Singapore during the monsoon season from November to March.

Singapore was a fixture in the Malaysian league for years, but a gambling scandal forced it to pull out of that circuit and start its own S-League, modeled on Japan's J-League, in 1996. *Reuters*

JUMP SMASH
Bao Chunlai of China lines up a jump smash against Roman Spitko of Germany during his first round match of the All England Badminton Championships in Birmingham Wednesday. Bao won, 2-0 (15-2; 15/5). AFP

Jr basketball clinic resumes at Araneta

AFTER a successful launching last weekend, the first-ever Burlington Junior PBA Basketball Clinic resumes with its second Saturday-Sunday session for kids 6 to 11 years old at the Araneta Coliseum.

The cage clinic, being conducted by multititled coach Norman Black, serves as the pregame event of the league's weekend games. Last week, a full complement of 50 kids participated in its debut run at the PhilSports Arena.

Assisting Black in the sessions are former PBA player Eric Reyes, RP team assistant coach Beaujing Acot and the assistant coaches of the PBA teams playing in the first game of the day's twinbill.

The maximum 50 slots for this weekend's sessions are already filled up, but registration is still open for the 6-11 bracket for the March 20 session at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City.

The clinic shifts to kids 12-16 years old for the weekends from March 21 to April 4.

For registration on the March 20 session, call the PBA office at 6381815 to 17 loc. 101 and look for Bebang Fuentes Ogsimer.

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
Ali 2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
Ali 3	HIDALGO
Ali 4	GOTHIKA
Ali 5	LOVE ACTUALLY
Ali 6	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
Ali 7	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

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MAR 14	PBA: GINEBRA VS. COKE
MAR 16	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 17	PBA: STA. LUCIA VS. TALK 'N' TEXT
MAR 18	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 21	PBA: SAN MIGUEL VS PUREFOODS

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	LANGIT MO, KALIGAYAHAN KO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	LANGIT MO LIGAYA KO
B	
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
CINEMA-3	DRAGON VS. NINJA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CARMEN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KUYA
CINEMA-6	U-BELT
CINEMA-7	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-8	ANNIE B.
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TORQUE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIDALGO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-12	LOVE ACTUALLY
CINEMA-14	GOTHIKA
CINEMA-15	GRUDGE 2
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-1	ANNIE B
CINEMA-2	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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P13

CINEMA 2 LOVE ACTUALLY
11:05, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 10:00
R18

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1 HIDALGO
11:40, 2:30, 5:20
8:10, 11:00
PG-13

2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
11:00, 1:10, 3:20
5:30, 7:40, 9:50
GP

3 LOVE ACTUALLY
11:40, 2:30, 5:20
8:10, 11:00
R-18

4 GOTHIKA
11:15, 1:30, 3:50
6:10, 8:30, 10:50
R-13

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CINEMA 1 THX GOTHIKA 12:25, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
2 THE GRUDGE 2 12:30, 2:35, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:45 DTS
4 CARMEN 10:40, 1:10, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00
5 HIDALGO 10:20, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40
6 LOVE ACTUALLY 10:20, 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40 SDDS
7 COLD MOUNTAIN 12:10, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
8 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
9 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE 12:40, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
10 TORQUE 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:45
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ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12
1 HIDALGO 11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40 DOLBY DIGITAL EX
2 THE GRUDGE 2 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
3 GOTHIKA 11:35, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:10, 10:00
4 CARMEN 11:30, 1:40, 3:50, 6:00, 8:10, 10:00
5 TORQUE 11:00, 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:40
6 LOVE ACTUALLY 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:00 SDDS
7 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 10:35, 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:40

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280
1 LOVE ACTUALLY 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
2 GOTHIKA 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00 SDDS
3 TORQUE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
4 HIDALGO 12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
6 THE GRUDGE 2 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
7 CARMEN 11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50 DTS
8 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31
1 THE GRUDGE 2 11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
2 GOTHIKA 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
3 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN 11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
4 ANNIE B. 12:05, 2:10, 4:15, 6:20, 8:30
5 HIDALGO 10:40, 12:05, 2:50, 5:35, 8:30
6 TORQUE 11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
7 LOVE ACTUALLY 10:40, 12:05, 2:50, 5:35, 8:30
8 CARMEN 11:50, 2:15, 4:40, 7:05, 9:00

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575
1 HIDALGO
2 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
3 ANNIE B.
4 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO

big Supercenter CAINTA 240-4661
1 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
2 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
3 CARMEN
4 HIDALGO

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907
1 TORQUE
2 GOTHIKA
3 DUPLEX
4 ANNIE B.
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

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2 ANNIE B.
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4 GHOST HOUSE
5 DUPLEX

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2 U-BELT
3 WATER DEMON
4 GHOST HOUSE
5 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
6 GOTHIKA THX STANDARD

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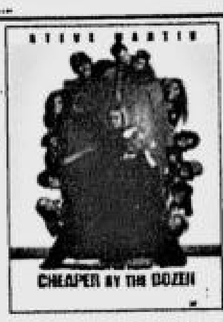
1 TORQUE
2 HIDALGO
3 LOVE ACTUALLY
4 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN DTS
5 GOTHIKA
6 LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO

BACOLOD 441-0458/59
1 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
2 COLD MOUNTAIN
3 ANNIE B.
4 MAGIC KITCHEN
5 WISHING STAIRS
6 U-BELT

ILOILO 336-8070/78
1 TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
2 COLD MOUNTAIN
3 ANNIE B.
4 SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
5 WISHING STAIRS
6 GHOST HOUSE



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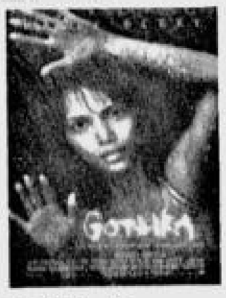

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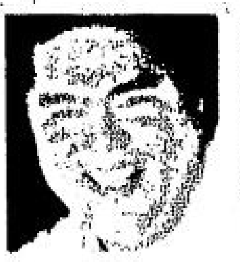
Basketball prospects found in Baguio Tryouts ng Bayan

FEWER players showed up, but the coaching staff of the Cebuana Lhuillier "Tryouts ng Bayan" didn't mind.

After all, many of those who strutted their stuff at the University of Baguio Gym over the weekend were of higher caliber than what they encountered in other stops of the nationwide search for basketball talents.

The dip in the number of aspirants to 40 was understandable, too, as most of the players were cramming up for this week's final exams.


VERGEIRE

ZAMAR

National coaches Dong Vergeire and Boyzie Zamar, however, spotted several solid potentials like 6-foot-6 Jayson Tiongson of University of Baguio, 6-5 Ephrain Torio of University of Luzon in Pangasinan and 6-3 Reynante Ober, who plays for Central Colleges of the Philippines in Manila. Two power forwards from St. Louis University, 6-2 Dominic Ballesteros and 6-1 Roni Nineza also caught their attention and so did a point guard from the Holy Angel College in Angeles, Pampanga.

Also, the free basketball clinic attracted a bigger number as close to 80 kids from 5- to 17-year-olds joined, coming mostly from Baguio City schools like UB, which has produced PBA players like Jun Marzan and Romualdo Cabading, SLU, Pines City High School, Baguio City High School, and even a group from faraway Philex mines.

Vergeire and Zamar went beyond the normal scope of the tryouts and basketball clinics as they conducted a coaching seminar for 22 local mentors representing a cross section of Baguio's coaching community, from high school and colleges to commercial and local governments.

Among the schools represented in the coaching seminar that touched on the various aspects of organizing and running a basketball team from juniors to seniors were SLU, BCF, Easter College, Pines City HS, Hope Christian Academy, San Jose HS, Cordillera Career College and Beti College of Technology. Non-school organizations included Skycable-Baguio, Way of Life Baptists Church, Life in the Spirit Fellowship, South Sanitary camp SK and the LGU of Baguio.

MOTO CLASH

Caltex-Revtex, Shell-Yamaha renew rivalry

THE FIERCE rivalry between the mighty Caltex-Revtex and Shell Advance-Yamaha teams simmers again on Sunday and Monday when Brooke's Point, Palawan, plays host to the third round of the National Motocross Championship Series and 4X4 Offroad Challenge.

The national motocross championship, held in cooperation with the town government of Brooke's Point headed by Mayor Jun Benedito Jr. and corporate backers Cebu Pacific, Aboitiz SuperFerry, Caltex Delo Sports, Red Horse Beer, Speed TV Show and BLTBCO, is expected to draw the country's finest riders, including Asian champion Glen Aguilar of Caltex-Revtex.

With the Castrol Team and regional squads from Batangas, La Union, Cebu, Mindanao, Laguna and host Palawan also in the fold, organizers said competitions will be hard-fought.

The event, sanctioned by Namssa and organized by MP Turbo, the Land Cruiser Club of the Philippines and the Palawan Eagle Motorcycle Club, is one of the highlights of Brooke's Point's fiesta celebrations.

"We are very happy to finally see the two mighty teams of Caltex and Shell do battle again," said chief organizer Mike Potenciano. "We thank them for setting aside their differences. Let's see how we can win in the coming international race."

Potenciano is referring to the upcoming FIM Asia International Motocross this March 25-28 in Puerto Princesa City. *(See related story on A28)*.

The Shell Advance-Yamaha team, led by brothers Ernie and Jing Leongson, is fielding at least 10 riders.

The Castrol team is already in Palawan since last weekend's Puerto's Foundation Day Invitational Motocross and expected to strike in the Novice, Enduro and Executive categories.

This will be the first time Brooke's Point will be holding a 4x4 event. Organizers expect teams from Palawan to crowd entries from Manila for top honors in the Production category.

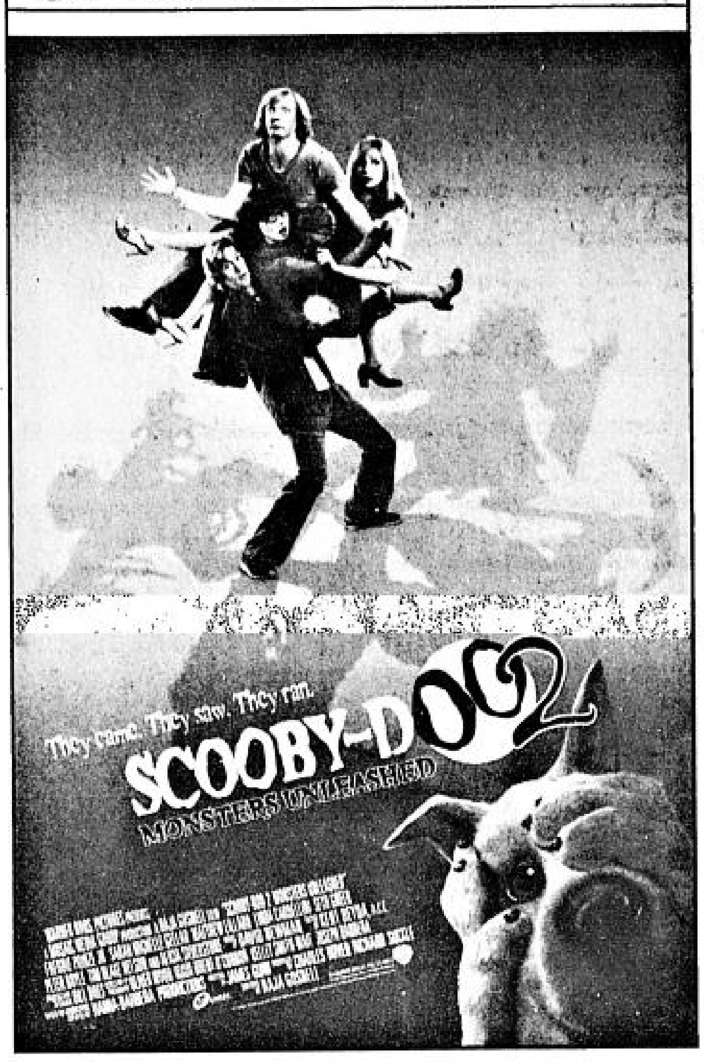
Valenzuela 5K March 28

A FUN run dubbed "Search For Valenzuela Running Star" kicks off on March 28 in Valenzuela City. The 5-K foot race will cover the barangays of Mapulang Lupa, Ugong, Gen. T. de Leon, Marulas, Karuhatan, Parada, Paso de Blas, Maysan and Bagbaguin, all comprising the city's second district. A project of the Responsible and Excellent Volunteers Organization (Revo), led by engineer Roy Evangelista and Kapitan Caina, the race will start at the Tañada covered court on Karen Street, Barangay Gen. T. de Leon, at exactly 6 a.m. "We are limiting participation to the first 500 registrants for purposes of effective race management," said Evangelista who also thanked Milo, Colgate Palmolive and Adidas for their support. Evangelista said only bona fide residents of Valenzuela City are eligible to take part in the races for men and women. For inquiries, call Alfren (0919-6158115), Mercy (0919-3434866) or Joy (9840483). All registrants are required to bring their ID, residence certificate and birth certificates. The race will be supervised by the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (Patafa).

PCC lines up 55 fights

FIFTY-FIVE matches are lined up tonight at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit in another derby sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Complexor 3000. PCC pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric de la Rosa and Butchoy Olano said the cockfest will start at 7 p.m. Today's host is the RCD Pasay Group. Seventy-four fights were held last Wednesday in a 4-cock derby hosted by Bobot Yu of Valenzuela. Meanwhile, the Pasay Cockpit Association (PCA) Challenge to Champions 5-Cock Derby kicks off on Monday. The event will also be held on Wednesday and Friday. At stake is P1 million, with the entry fee pegged at P8,800. Submission of weights is on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

OPENS MARCH 24!



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GOTHIKA R13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	CARMEN R18 12:30, 3:00, 5:20, 8:00, 10:30	HIDALGO PG13 12:15, 2:50, 5:25, 8:00, 10:30

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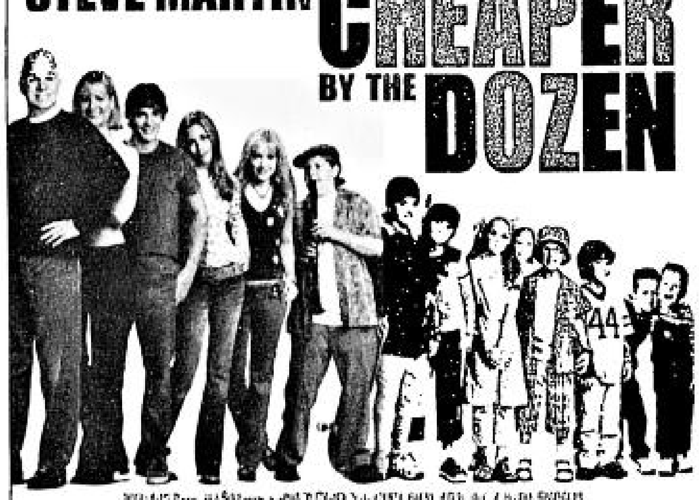

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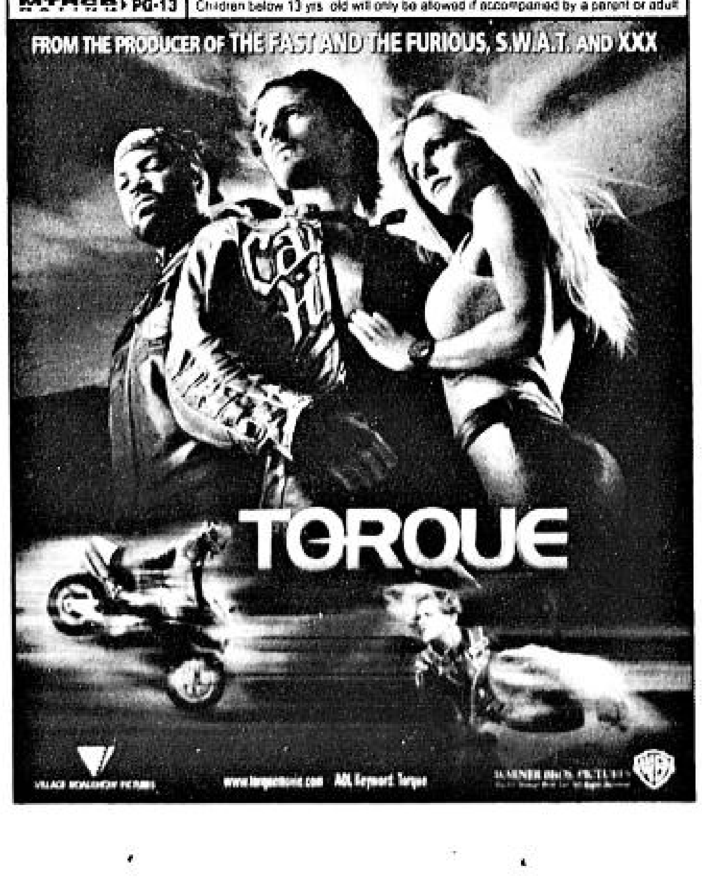

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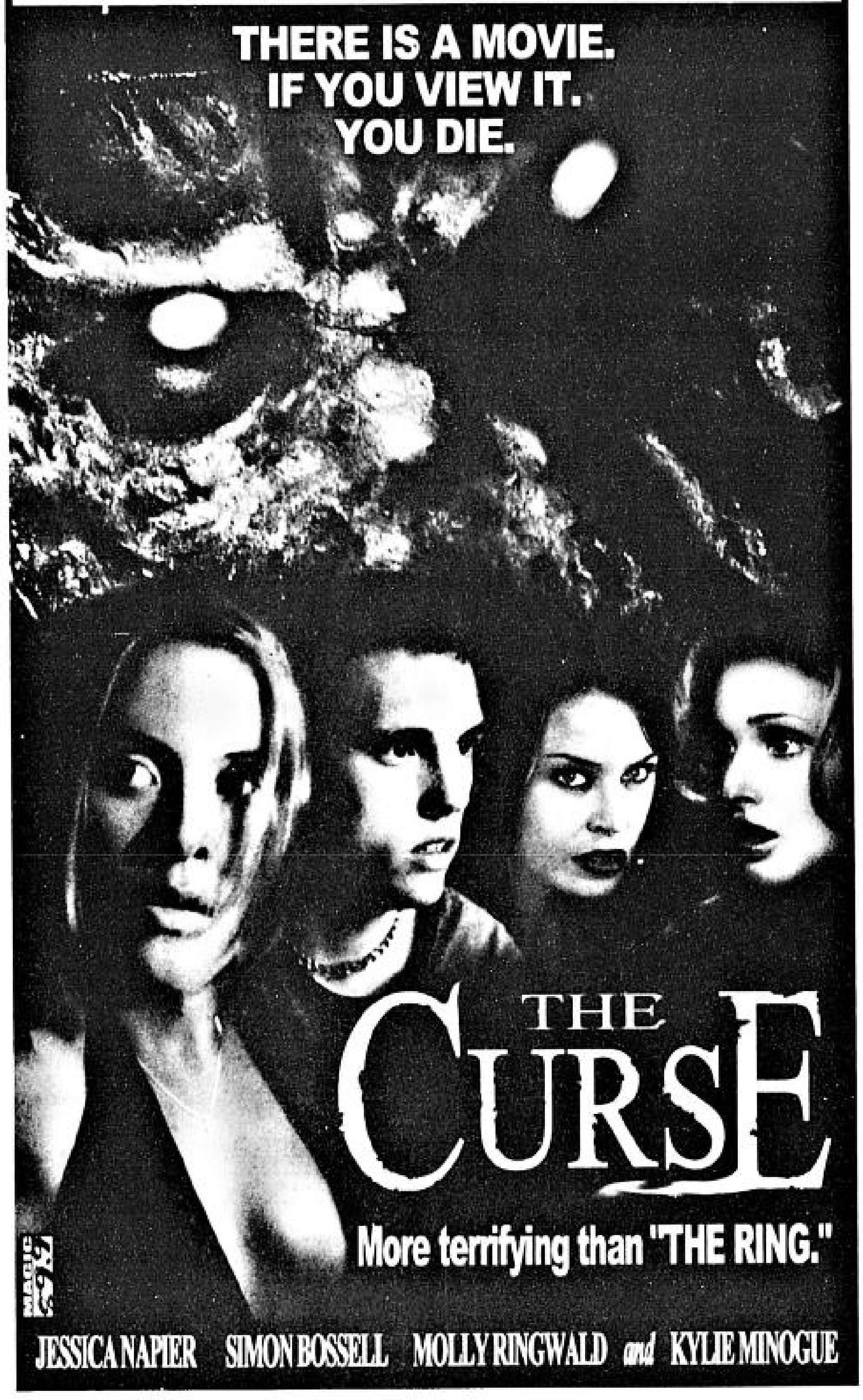
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SM CINEMA
what to watch
Romance
LOVE ACTUALLY
This all-star ensemble comedy follows 10 separate but intertwining stories exploring the ins and outs of love, ranging from love sought to love found to love lost. Set in contemporary London in the two months before Christmas, it weaves together a series of touching and hilarious stories, which end in not one, but lots and lots of romantic climaxes on Christmas Eve. LOVE ACTUALLY is actually short for "Love Actually Is All Around" and that is the argument of the film - that everywhere you look, love is the driving force in people's lives.
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loveactually

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DIAL 8339999 for screening schedules
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Fencing qualifier set April 19

TOP local fencers will vie for slots in the Athens Olympics when the Asia/Oceania Qualifying is held April 19-20 at the Philsports Arena in Pasig City.

A maximum of 22 nations throughout Asia and two from Oceania, Australia and New Zealand are expected to compete in the individual slots in men's and women's epee, foil and sabre events.

The gold and silver medalists in each event will qualify to the Olympics, according to Philippine Amateur Fencers Association official Gerardo Jimenez. *Rey Danseco, contributor*

Football coverage

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Paro wins

PHILIPPINE No. 2 Sherwin Paro prevailed over Jojo Rodrigo in their 10-round elimination encounter Wednesday night on IBC-13.

Paro, who improved to 13-2 win-loss with 8 KOs, now waits for the result of the Barcelona-Campana bout seen on Wednesday next week at 9 p.m. on IBC-13.

Dartfest on

THE THREE-DAY Philmasters Darts Championship 2004 starts today at the South Gallery, 2nd Level of SM City-Davao, Quimpo Boulevard

The tournament, which is one of the four major events of the Darts Council of the Philippines (DCP), is billed as "Mayor Rodrigo R. Duterte Cup" and is organized through the efforts of Laurence "Bong" Go, lawyer J. Melchor Quitain Bobby Yanong and the Davao City Hall Darters.

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. King's Choice 2. Mountain Eagle 3. Silver Place 4. Day Break

Race 2--1. Assunta de Rio 2. Queen of D Jungle 3. My Little Pet 4. Top Jay 5. Chase the Wind

Race 3--1. My Rabbonnie 2. Morning Nell 3. Sexy Royale

Race 4--1. Ole Ole Ole 2. Morning Glory 3. Free Hand 4. Quedan 5. Master Kenneth

Race 5--1. Nothing to Declare 2. Hazmagic 3. Red Rose 4. Dynamic Jason/Prince Valiant

Race 6--1. Cable Car 2. Black & White 3. Long Road

Race 7--1. Lady Lawyer 2. Romario/Napa Valley 3. Conglomerate 4. Skip Away 5. Sand Splash

Race 8--1. I Love This Game 2. Rumaragasa 3. Gelil 4. Top Most

Race 9--1. Concorde/Petro Dollar 2. That's My Tiger 3. Mr. Lucas 4. Kokopelli/Love and Kisses 5. Cuadro de Alas 6. Friendly Lover/Reporter

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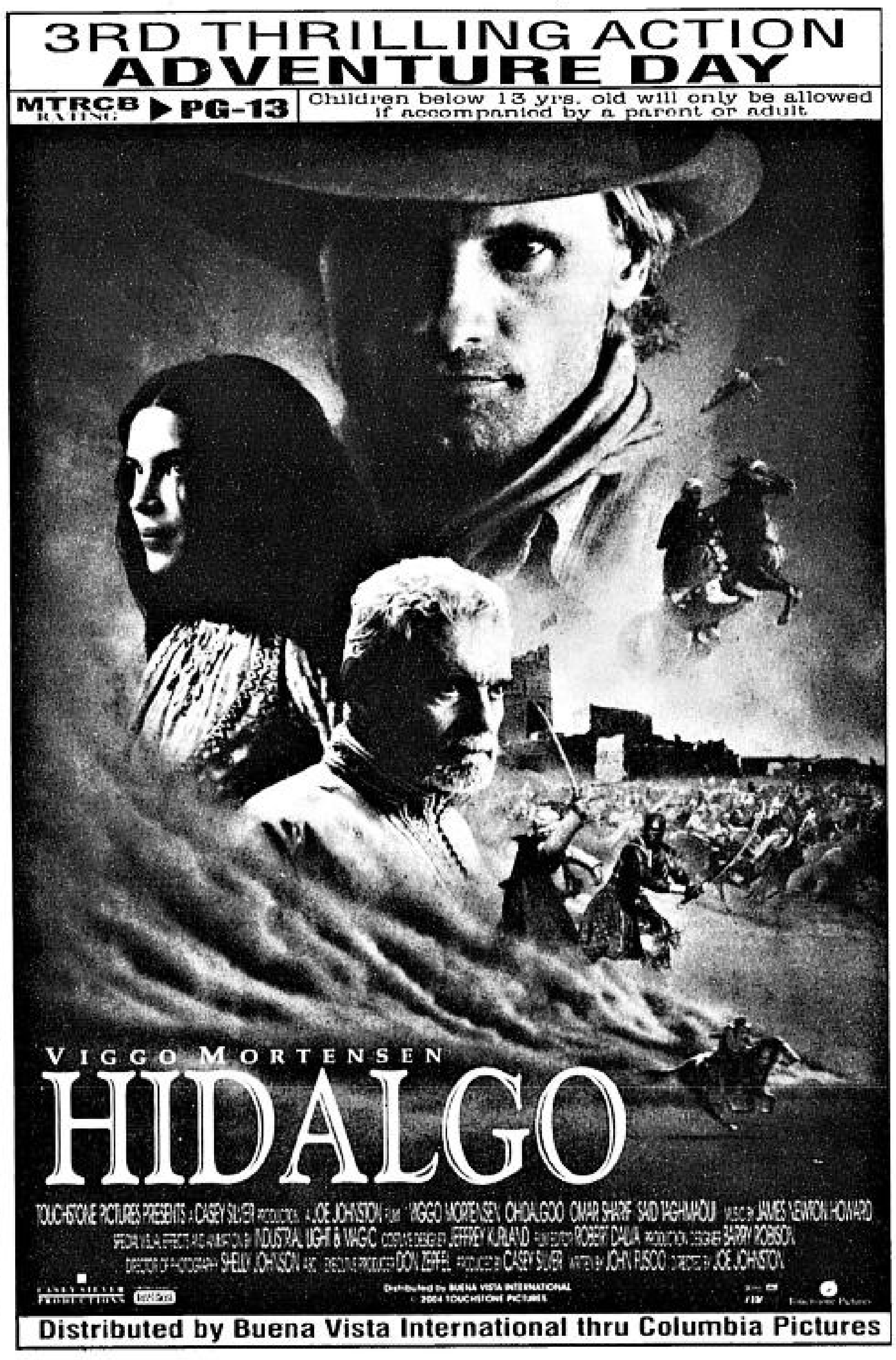
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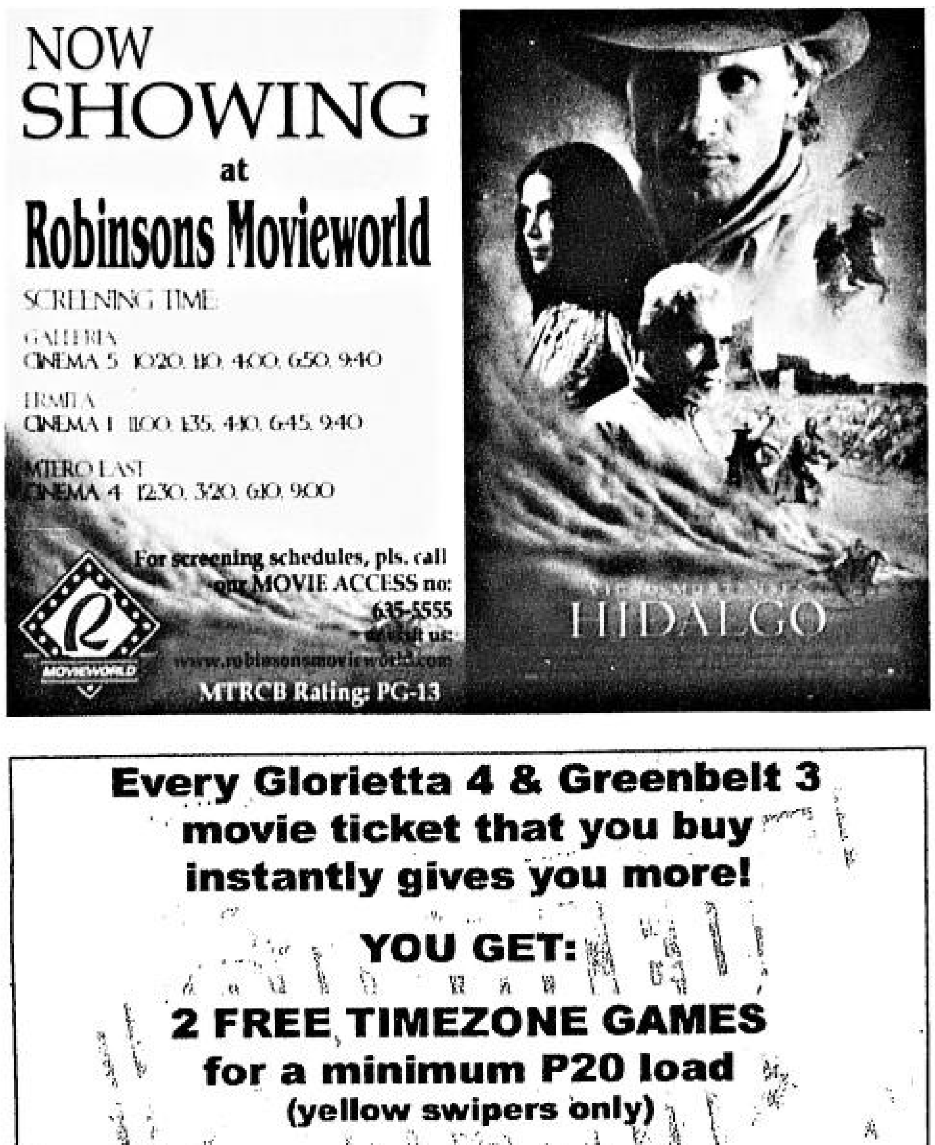
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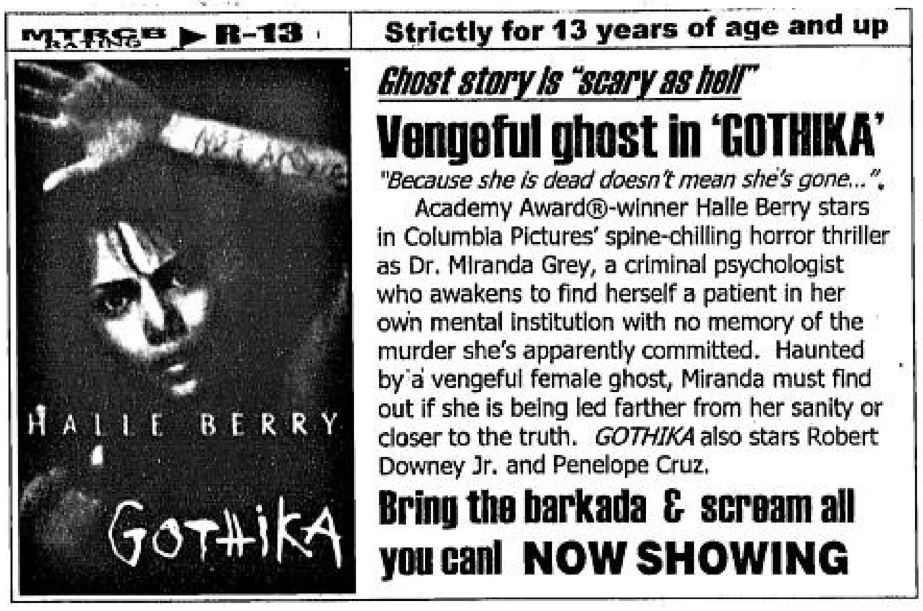
MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 Strictly for 13 years of age and up
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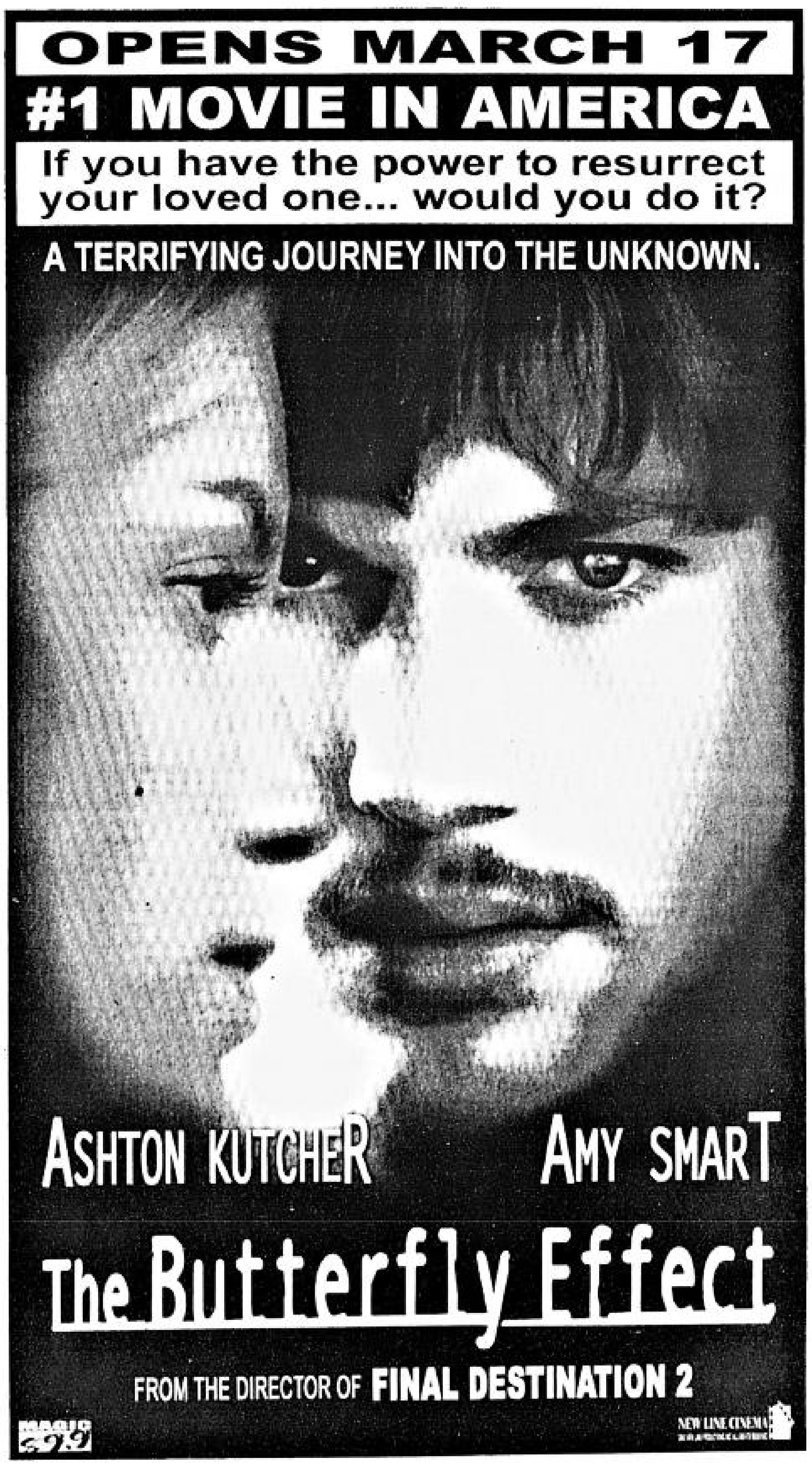
Bring the barkada & scream all you can! NOW SHOWING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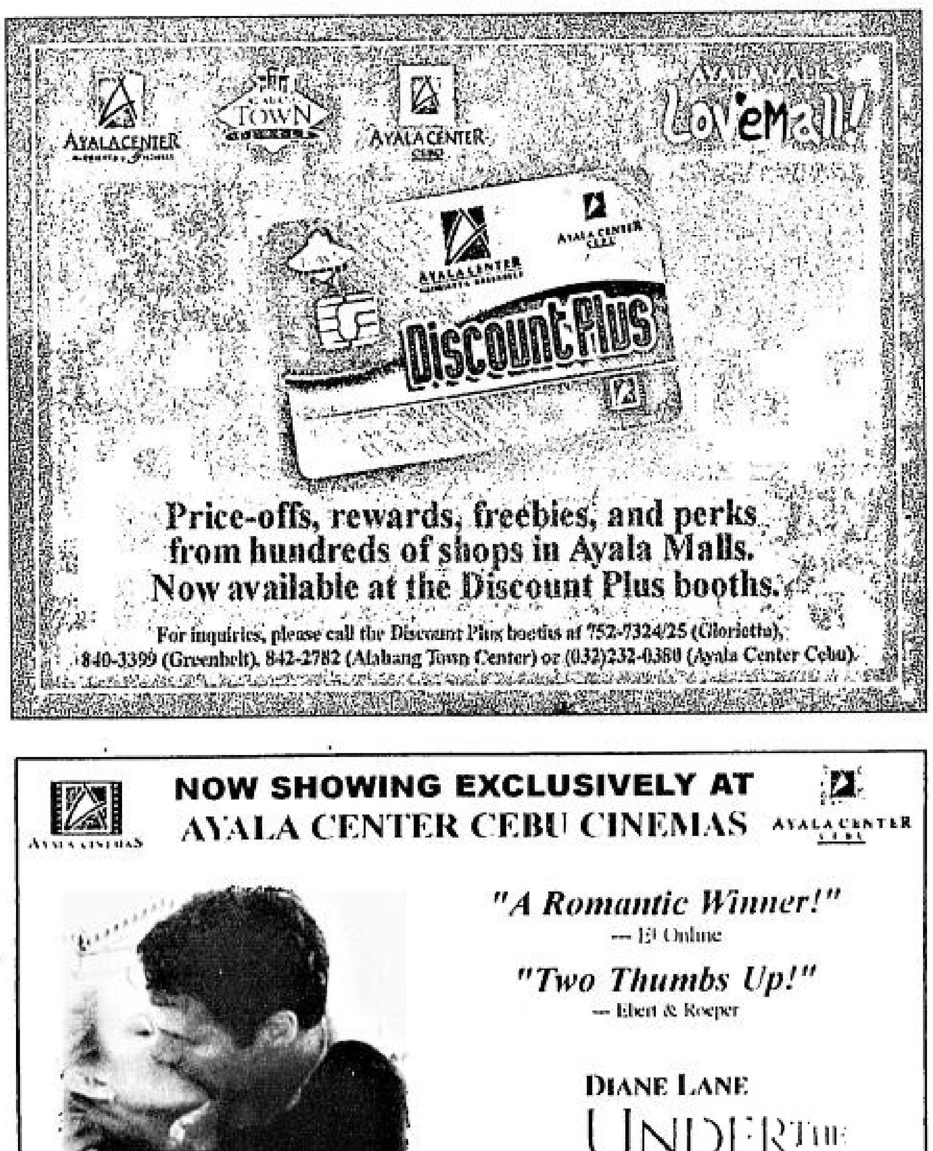
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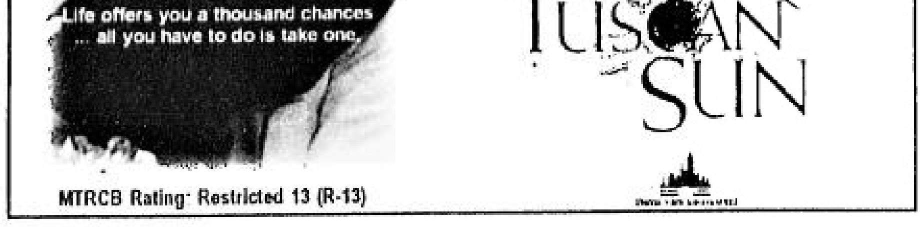
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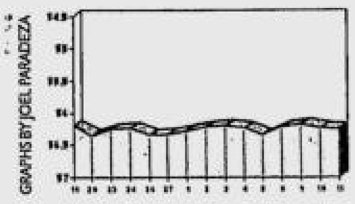

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As of 5 p.m., March 11, 2004

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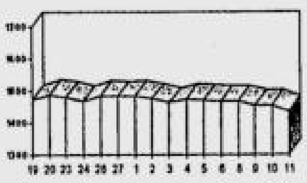
Stocks hit 4-month low

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices closed down 1.42 percent yesterday, at their lowest level in four months after further heavy losses overnight on Wall Street, dealers said.

A dearth of fresh corporate news and concerns ahead of the May presidential election discouraged investors from taking aggressive positions and some were quick to cash in on short-term gains.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 20.60 points to 1,435.07 after trading between 1,432.33 and 1,447.13 points.

Losers outnumbered gainers 34 to 11, while 43 stocks closed unchanged.

Volume rose to 169.46 million shares worth P789.7 million from 163.99 million shares worth P412.19 million on Wednesday.

The all-shares index declined 18.93 points to 917.59 while the commercial-industrial index fell 38.81 to 2,231.88. Property lost 4 points to 512.90 while the mining sector shed 30.39 to 1,458.79.

"Basically, we're afflicted by the New York disease, particularly our benchmark stock in the US," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings, referring to Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which is traded there.

"Investors have been reluctant to buy stocks due to the lack of positive earnings and economic news," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

"Moreover, there are others who are worried that last year's rally means share prices may have already factored in gains in earnings for this year," he said.

AFP

By Doris C. Dumlao

DESPITE the peso's recent fall to historic lows against the US dollar, the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday decided to keep its overnight policy interest rates unchanged for the seventh consecutive month.

Emerging from the monthly policy rate-setting of the board, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said key overnight rates were kept at 6.75 percent for borrowing and 9 percent for lending.

The BSP's policy rates were last adjusted in July last year when these were cut by 25 basis points. Although the rates were kept at the same level since then, there was a virtual tightening in August when the policy-making Monetary Board lifted the tiering scheme for banks' placements with the BSP.

"The outlook for inflation over the horizon continues to be manageable but there's some downside risk on account of the volatile movement of oil prices, adjustment in transport prices and continued pressure on the foreign exchange side driven in part by political developments," BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

Tetangco also said that despite the peso's recent drop to a new all-time low of 56.35 to the dollar, the peso-dollar exchange rate volatility had relatively stabilized since January.

The BSP uses an inflation rate-targeting model in setting its overnight policy rates, which in turn are used by banks as benchmarks in pricing their loans.

"The decision to maintain the current monetary policy settings also reflects the MB's view that the present stance of monetary policy is appropriately supportive of the price stability and growth objectives of the economy," Buenaventura said.

"Furthermore, the MB believes that the current monetary policy is consistent with the need to ensure sufficient liquidity to sustain domestic demand," he stressed.

The BSP chief said the general macroeconomic environment should remain conducive to credit demand and investment activity and financing conditions should not become unduly restrictive to those planning to borrow.

"Going forward, the BSP will continue to monitor carefully all developments that could affect the monetary authorities' assessment of risks to inflation and inflation expectations over the policy horizon," he said.

As a preemptive response to inflationary threats arising from the peso-dollar volatility, the Monetary Board raised last February the liquidity reserve requirement on peso deposits and deposit substitutes of banks and non-banks with quasi-banking functions by 2 percentage points.

Gov't sets quarterly deficit goals for '04

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT has reiterated its position of sticking to its conservative stance in disbursing public funds as it aims to gradually check the country's huge fiscal gap.

The inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee, which is tasked to craft the government's economic and fiscal targets, has formulated its quarterly deficit goals during its meeting last Tuesday.

According to the deficit schedule, the government is targeting to achieve a budget gap of not more than P58.9 billion for the first quarter, and a deficit not exceeding P79.6 billion at the end of the second quarter. For the end-September and for the full year, the government is hoping to hit the deficit ceiling of P143.3 billion and P197.8 billion, respectively.

GOV'T/B3

NEW UNILAB PLANT IN LAGUNA

President Macapagal-Arroyo is briefed by Unilab president-COO Carlos C. Ejercito (second from left) about the company's new manufacturing plant that will soon rise in Mamplasan, Biñan, Laguna. Looking on are (from left): Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit; Delfin Samson Jr., Unilab vice chair-international; Joselito Campos Jr., Unilab chair-CEO, and Biñan Mayor Hermie Perez.

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GMA signs law phasing out operations of textile board

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has signed an executive order streamlining the operation of the Garments and Textile Export Board.

This was in anticipation of the GTEB's dissolution in 2005 when garment quotas would be phased out.

The GTEB, an agency attached to the Department of Trade and Industry, is responsible for the negotiation, administration, allocation and monitoring of garments and textiles export quota.

The quotas will be removed next year as provided under the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Textiles and Clothing.

Signed on Feb. 23, Executive Order No. 285 states that the GTEB should be streamlined due to the phasing-out of its major functions next year, which would leave the agency with the residual functions of developing and promoting garments and textile exports.

The order also paves the way for the transfer of GTEB's remaining functions to appropriate units of the DTI.

EO 285 added that affected GTEB employees would be entitled to a separation benefit equivalent to two months of their current monthly salary for every year of service.

Early this month, the GTEB said exports to the United States were expected to decline by 9 percent this year as a result of the removal of quotas in 2005.

However, GTEB executive director Serafin N. Juliano said the country's trade representatives in Washington D.C. were stepping up efforts to secure additional orders.

GTEB data showed that the country shipped to the US some 21 million dozens of garments in 2003.

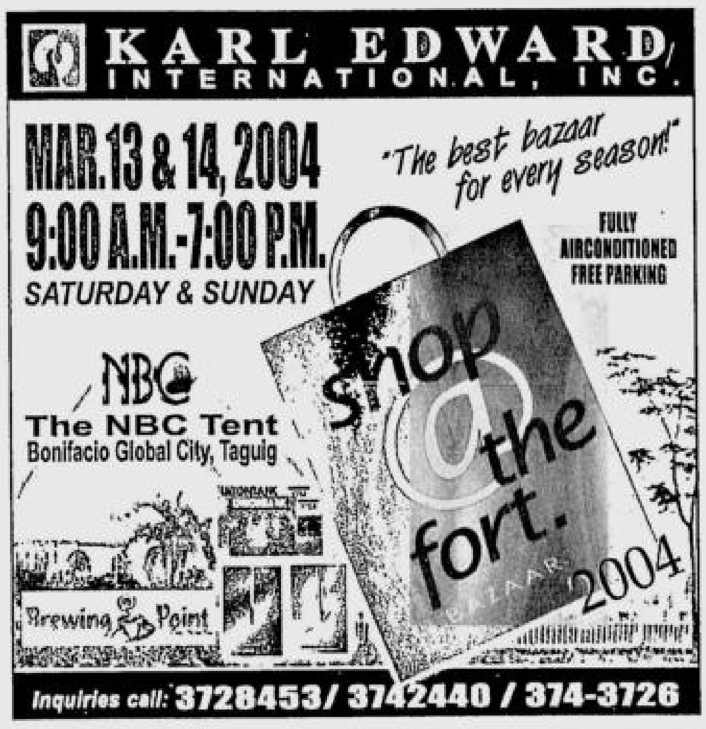
This year, the Philippines is allowed to ship about 19.3 million dozens.

Juliano said the Philippines could not expect an increase in exports this year as the country could no longer borrow (carry forward) shipment allocations from a succeeding year given that there would be no more quotas next year.

"This is coupled with the 2003 excess shipment that was charged (or carried forward) to 2004 quotas," the official said.

He added that there were 14 product categories that were assured of US quotas for 2004.

These include pants, knit shirts, coats, underwear and night wear.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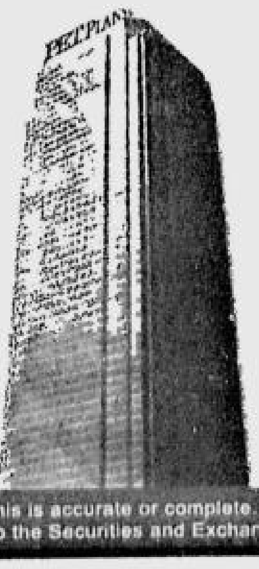

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Pecabar mutiny

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

JUAN Ponce Enrile is getting a dose of his own medicine.

Pecabar, the law firm headed by the mutinous Marcos and Aquino defense secretary, is being roiled by a third major revolt in its two-decade history.

Seven lawyers—headed by chief of the litigation department, Armando Marcelo, and senior litigator Jesse Hermogenes Andres—have abruptly tendered their resignations or, according to another version, have been asked to leave the firm.

Reason for the breakup? Festering differences with a Pecabar managing partner and fellow litigators Rossano Nisce and Denis Habawel as well as the usual beef about profit sharing.

According to the grapevine, Marcelo's group has been on terminal leave since Monday.

Founded in 1983, Pecabar suffered its major split in June 1993 when Edmund Tan, Sabino Acut Jr. and Rainier Madrid left to hang their own shingle.

The second major breakaway occurred right after name partner Renato Cayetano was elected senator in 1998, bringing with him a number of senior associates. Cayetano's group eventually formed the Cayetano Sebastian Ata Dado & Cruz law office.

Equitable play

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System continues to accumulate shares of Equitable PCI Bank, picking up 1.76 million shares from the market last month to bring its total equity stake in the target takeover bank to about 11.47 percent.

This, plus Social Security System's 25.8 percent, puts the government stake to 47.27 percent, a few percentage points away from EPCIB achieving the status of a government-owned or controlled corporation.

GSIS said its average acquisition price for the latest batch of EPCIB shares was P40.80, against the P93.08/share it paid during the Erap-mandated stock market forays it had ventured into.

Short takes

- EX-FINANCE Undersecretary Romeo Bernardo, who is now trying to cram Economics 101 into FPJ after advising the new Indian owners of National Steel Corp., says he is staying out of the now controversial tariff protective mantle being asked from Malacañang by the newly privatized NSC. Bernardo says he and his group, the Foundation for Economic Freedom, still wants the Philippines to proceed with its original tariff reduction commitment with WTO/AFTA.
- FORMER Ambassador to Italy Jose Zaldarriaga was the charter commodore of the Subic Bay Yacht Club, not Victor Villavicencio as may have been implied in a Wednesday item.

Heard through the grapevine

VICTOR Chiongbian, supposedly rolling in dough again, had been regaling his Cebu circle that he was willing to bet P100 million that GMA would lose in the May elections. A miffed Bob Gothong anted up, and asked Chiongbian to match an initial P50 million in escrow. The normally boisterous Chiongbian waffled, and eventually called the whole thing off.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.

Gov't sets quarterly deficit goals for '04

From page B1

"This affirms the government's commitment to balancing its budget by 2009, consistent with its deficit reduction strategy," said DBCC Chair and Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin.

With the P197.8-billion budget deficit target, the government is actually aiming at setting the fiscal gap at 4.2 percent of the expected gross domestic product for the year. In 2003, the P199.9-billion deficit was equivalent to 4.6 percent of GDP.

The DBCC said the projected improvement in the level of the government's budget gap would be attributed to the expected increase in revenue collection coupled with a reduction in spending.

For this year, the government is expecting to increase revenue by 7.9 percent and to reduce disbursements by 5.8 percent from 2003 levels. Last year, total government revenue stood at P626.6 billion, while expenditures amounted to P826.5 billion, resulting in a deficit of P199.9 billion.

But while the government said it was adopting prudence in spending, it has approved certain expenditures for the first quarter that were related to compensation of public employees and military development.

The DBCC agreed to allocate P4 billion for clothing allowance of state workers, and another P2 billion for the modernization of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The delay in the release of the official quarterly deficit targets was due to the failure of Congress to pass the 2004 budget. The failure to pass the 2004 General Appropriations Act led the DBCC to formulate new quarterly targets that will be based on the 2003 reenacted budget. The originally proposed 2004 full-year deficit target of P197.8 billion was kept.

This was the second time the Macapagal administration used a re-enacted budget. In 2001, the government was forced to adopt the 2000 budget due to the political upheavals that led to the ouster of President Estrada and the installation of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

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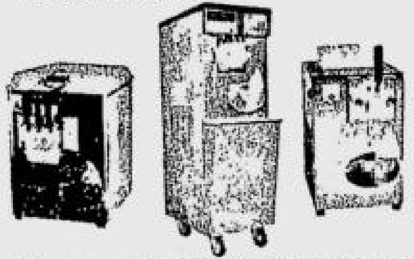
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.0086	0.9992

* Note: These investments of variable life insurance contracts are not mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.



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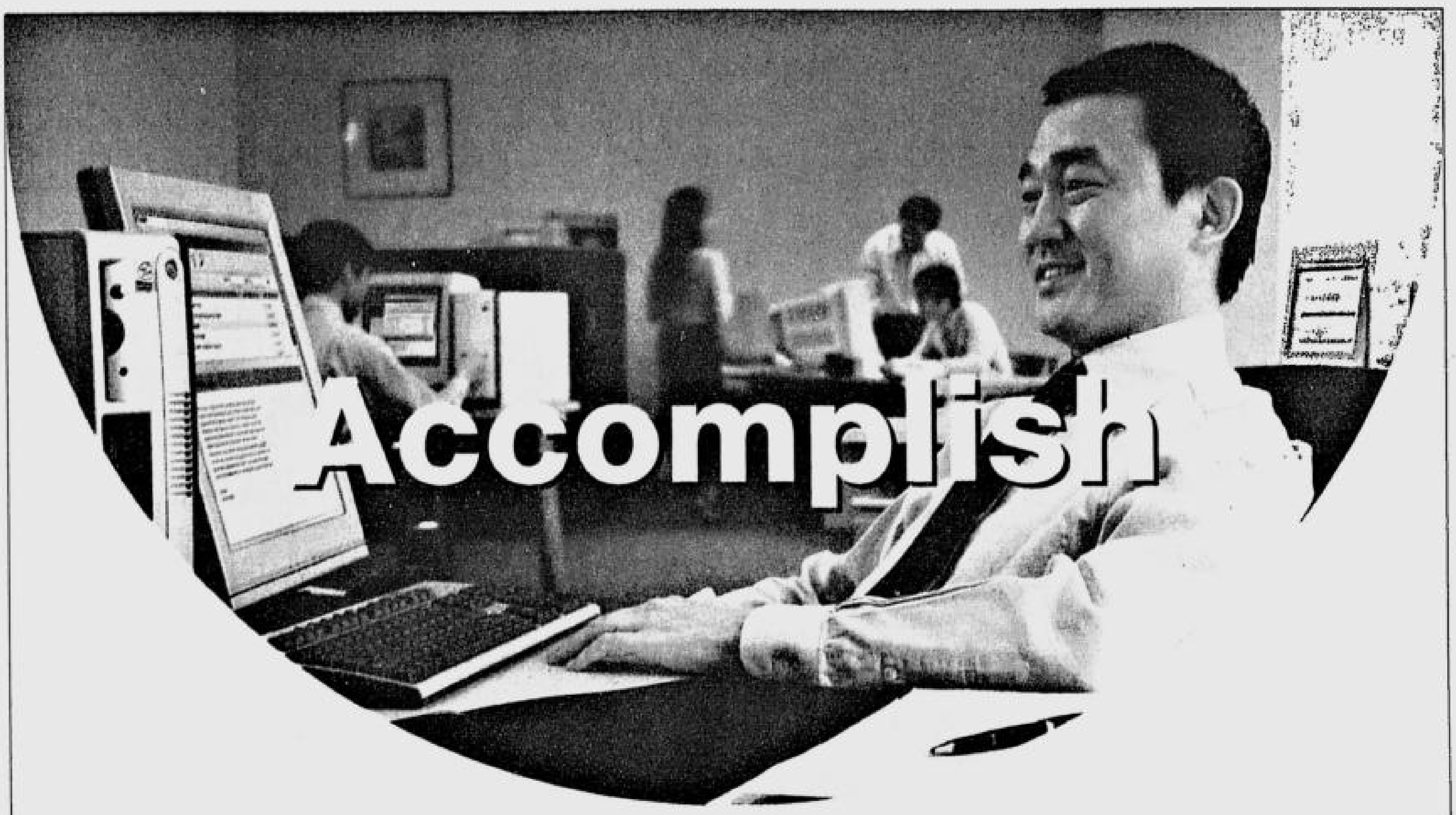

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GMA urges immediate Subic, Clark integration

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima and Bases Conversion Development Authority president and CEO Rufo Colayco to immediately resolve all issues that have hobbled the integration of the former American military bases in Clark and Subic.

During the Central Luzon Summit on the Global Gateways at the Holiday Inn hotel in Clark Field Pampanga Wednesday, Ms Macapagal reaffirmed her support to the Subic-Clark Alliance Development project.

"I think the principle of having an airport in Clark and having ports in the East and West sides is good for the distribution of goods and services," the President said.

The project, which aims to transform the Subic-Clark corridor into a multi-modal distribution and international logistics hub, has been delayed due to opposition from former Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon and his constituency in Olongapo City and differences on how to go about its implementation.

The President said Purisima "should be able to see from a fresh point of view the contentious issues still hounding project."

She said the main issue in the project was who would take the lead in its implementation.

"Do we have to establish a separate corporation? But if that will be a cause for controversy, we can just create a functional merger of all agencies involved," the President said.

Based on the original plan, Clark Development Corp. would contribute the airport and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority its seaport as initial assets of the planned corporation to oversee the project.

Another key issue is the implementation of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac tollway project—a four-lane, 94.5-kilometer expressway from Subic in Olongapo to Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac—where 85 percent of the funding will be bankrolled by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

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March 13, 2004 at 6:30 pm

IBC 13

Vietnam, S. Korea eye RP chicken

By Christine A. Gaylican

VIETNAM and South Korea have signified interest to import dressed chicken from the Philippines.

This was disclosed by the Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators Inc. (Pabi), which groups the country's largest agri-business firms including San Miguel Foods Corp., RFM Swift Foods, Tyson-Agro-Ventures Inc., Universal Robina Corp. and Vitarich Corp.

The Philippines has been exporting dressed chicken since early this year as it has remained free of the avian flu virus hounding many countries in Asia.

Pabi president Rita Palabyab said in an interview with the INQUIRER yesterday that Pabi members have sent out an initial 14 metric tons of dressed chicken to Japan.

"Another 23 tons will be sailing next week. This forms part of the 37 metric tons that the broiler integrators have initially settled with Japanese firms led by Marubeni Corp.," noted Palabyab, a vice president of San Miguel.

Local companies are gearing up to corner a portion of the $350-million dressed chicken market supplied by Thailand.

"We would want to at least supply Japan and see to it that we maintain this market share and be side by side with Thailand when the avian flu crisis is over," said RFM Foods chair Jose Concepcion Jr. in a separate interview.

In 2003, chicken exports to Japan reached 43.62 million kilograms.

As of Jan. 7, these companies have shipped out 9,720 kilograms, according to data from the Bureau of Animal Industry.

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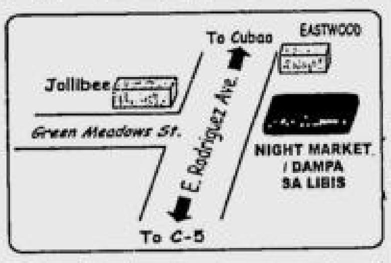

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ADVERTISING SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

The Advertising Suppliers Association of the Philippines (ASAP), a non-stock, non-profit organization, duly recognized by the Advertising Board of the Philippines (ADBOARD), is comprised of various business and professional entities who provides services and expertise to the Philippine advertising industry. It is composed of the following: Advertising Photographers, Audio Recording Studios, Audio Visual/Multimedia Production Houses, Color Separators/Printers, Commercial Production Houses, Graphic Designers/Special Promo Merchandising, Jingle Writers /Producers/Arrangers, Model/Talent Agencies, Post Production Facilities & Related Services, Service Talents, Special Events, and Technical Services & Equipment Rental.

ASAP INDUCTS 2004 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Advertising Suppliers Association of the Philippines (ASAP) will induct its Officers and Board of Directors for the year 2004, today March 12. It will be presided by the Adboard Chairman, Mr. Cerge M. Remonde as Induction Officer with PANA President, Mr. Raul S. Alvarez as the Guest Speaker.

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ASAP Black Book Silver Edition

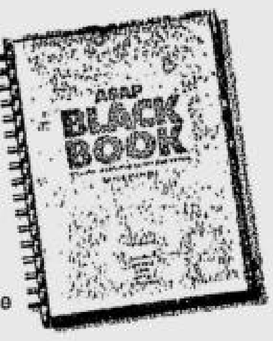
Revisits Basic Values

The Advertising Suppliers Association of the Philippines (ASAP) gave themselves a treat last year as they celebrated their 25th Anniversary. Though the difficult times required a little prudence, they managed to stir hoopla, as expected.

Part of the silver year highlight is the launching of the Black Book – "Silver Edition". The commemorative edition is the only published comprehensive and most complete source book on the Philippine advertising suppliers and the industry in general. It is a revitalized medium showcasing increased and updated membership, expanded creative portfolio representing various sectors and a back to basic theme on good business values.

Chairman Alvin Manacsa and President Khalil Khodr delivered a message in the Black Book "to return to the basics of what makes for lasting success" and that "behind every great business are great values". Both Khalil and Alvin shared their vision for the ASAP to become a vehicle of change through the strength of its values and competencies of its character that serve as the foundation for true prosperity.

Through the Black Book Silver Edition, members and industry allies can revisit the all-important values that the ASAP has stood for in the last 25 years. Hopefully, this journey of sorts will inspire more people to live by the same set of values to bring not only the ASAP, but the entire nation as well, towards a brighter future.



More money through soil analysis

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

ACCORDING to the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, there are 11.1 million farmers in the Philippines. "However, less than 400,000 or 4 percent of them do soil analysis," according to Eduardo Paningbatan Jr.

Dr. Paningbatan is currently the director of the agricultural systems cluster of UPLB. This cluster is composed of the departments of soil science, agricultural education and rural studies, and the Research Institute for Farm Systems. He laments the very low usage of soil analysis, because he says this has one of the best returns on investment (ROIs) in agriculture today.

An example

Adoracion Guy of UPLB's soil science department tells the story of Barangay Captain Maala of Bubukal, Sta. Maria, Laguna. Prior to soil testing, Maala used three bags of urea for his one-hectare palay farm. The soil test revealed his land lacked nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium.

He therefore added five bags of complete (14-14-14) fertilizer and took out one bag of urea. Though this resulted in added fertilizer cost of P2,000, his palay yield increased from 35 to 70 cavans. At P7 per kilo, this meant an added income of P12,250, or a return of more than six times his additional P2,000 fertilizer investment.

Soil test desirability

Last Jan. 31, the Philippine Information Agency cited Department of Agriculture (DA) agriculturist Pamela Soza's report that 1,165 farmers availed themselves of the soil laboratory analysis provided by the DA in Region 11. She also stated that "walk-in clients came from different parts of Mindanao and from as far as the Visayas." This attests to the increasing awareness of farmers regarding the desirability and potential profitability derived from soil analysis.

My own experience confirms this finding. In the early 1980s, when I took over our family farm in Balayan, Batangas, I found out that very few of my relatives did soil analysis. Aside from the fact that the benefits of soil analysis were not fully understood, one had to go a great distance to a soils laboratory.

Nevertheless, I chose to do a soil analysis on our land, which had never been done. The sweet potato crop I planted yielded 30 tons a hectare, six times the national average. Though this was partly due to the sweet potato variety I used from the Visayan State College of Agriculture (ViSCA), much of the reason for the high yield was the precise fertilizer combination suggested by the soil analysis.

The good news

Today, the inconvenience of traveling great distances to a soil laboratory has been solved. Paningbatan and Guy spearheaded a project to produce a very affordable soil test kit (STK). STK is a miniature portable laboratory consisting of chemical reagents, color charts, test tubes and an instruction manual on how to conduct an on-the-spot soil test. It gives advice on how best to deal with the results, such as what fertilizer is suitable for any given soil type and crop. The cost per kit ranges from P850 to P1,000.

The STK has been the recipient of three prestigious awards, including: Outstanding Development Award in Agriculture, Outstanding Extension Community Service Award, and Outstanding Extension Project Award. It was also one of the three reasons the DA's Bureau of Soils and Water Management under Director Rogelio Concepcion won the 2002 Pag-Asa Award. The soil test kit under Dr. Lauro Hernandez combined with the related balanced fertilization strategy under Dr. Perfecto Evangelista and the water impounding system under Engr. Rodolfo Lucas to win this award.

Since an STK can be used for at least 25 samples, Paningbatan says this can be used by 25 farmers with one-hectare farms. At P1,000 per STK, this means a farmer has to invest only P40 to determine the appropriate fertilizer for his or her farm. As shown earlier, this can mean an added income of as much as P12,250, as in the case of Maala.

The bad news

The bad news is that there are less than 15,000 STKs available in the country today. Paningbatan has transferred this technology to agencies such as the DA and the Department of Agrarian Reform. However, because of budget constraints, the government has been able to produce or procure only a limited number of STK's. There is no lack of demand for STKs. When I visited the different regions during my term as DA undersecretary, I found out that there was often a severe lack of STK's because of the very limited budget available for it.

Business and agriculture

Without soil analysis, agriculture can be a bad business. But soil analysis can make much of agriculture very profitable. The soil test kit (STK) itself can be good business. However, it is regarded today more as an agriculture service given by the government than a profitable venture.

Paningbatan wishes to see a written formal system where technologies such as the STK will be transferred to the business sector with the appropriate incentives given to the people developing these technologies. Spurred by the profit motive, these technologies will not remain underutilized but instead find extensive application among our farmers. This system will also provide the financial rewards to further motivate the technology developers, who often get nothing after their technologies are transferred to the field.

Businessmen should likewise invest their time and resources to systematically look at the wealth of agricultural technologies in UPLB and our other agricultural institutions. It is said that Filipinos developed the technologies and stop there, while the other countries get our technologies and benefit from their implementation. It is about time that we develop and implement a system of bringing business systematically into agriculture, especially when it comes to agricultural technologies. Focusing on the STK both for the technology developer and the farmer is suggested as a possible first step in this direction.

(The author is chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects. For inquiries or suggestions, e-mail agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 02-8516635.)

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
Makati City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

March 25, 2004

To The Stockholders:

Pursuant to Article IV of the Amended By-Laws of the Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of BPI will be held at Rizal A Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Ayala Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City on Thursday, March 25, 2004, at 9:00 o'clock in the morning, for the transaction of the following business:

1. Calling of Meeting to Order.
2. Certification of Notice.
3. Roll Call of Stockholders.
4. Determination and Declaration of Quorum.
5. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Stockholders on April 3, 2003.
6. Reading of Annual Report and approval of the Bank's Statement of Condition as of December 31 2003 incorporated in the Annual Report.
7. Approval and Confirmation of all Acts during the past year of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and all other Board and Management Committees and Officers of BPI.
8. Declaration of Stock Dividend.
9. Election of 15 Members of the Board of Directors.
10. Election of External Auditors and Fixing their Remuneration.
11. Directors' Bonus.
12. Other Matters.

In accordance with Article XII of the said-By-Laws, the Stock and Transfer Book of BPI will be closed from February 24 to March 25, 2004. Only Stockholders of record as of February 24, 2004 will be entitled to notice and to vote at this meeting.

If it will be inconvenient for you to attend the meeting, you may at your option, appoint another person to represent you thereat by means of a proxy, which should be submitted to the Office of the Corporate Secretary of BPI, 19th Floor, BPI Building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, Metro Manila, not later than 5:00 P.M. of March 18, 2004. Validation of proxies shall be held at the same office on March 19, 2004 at 4:00 P.M.

When signing as attorney-in-fact, executor, administrator, guardian, or in any other representative capacity, please give full title and file papers showing your authority.

FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Sgd.) **CARLOS B. AQUINO**
Vice President &
Corporate Secretary

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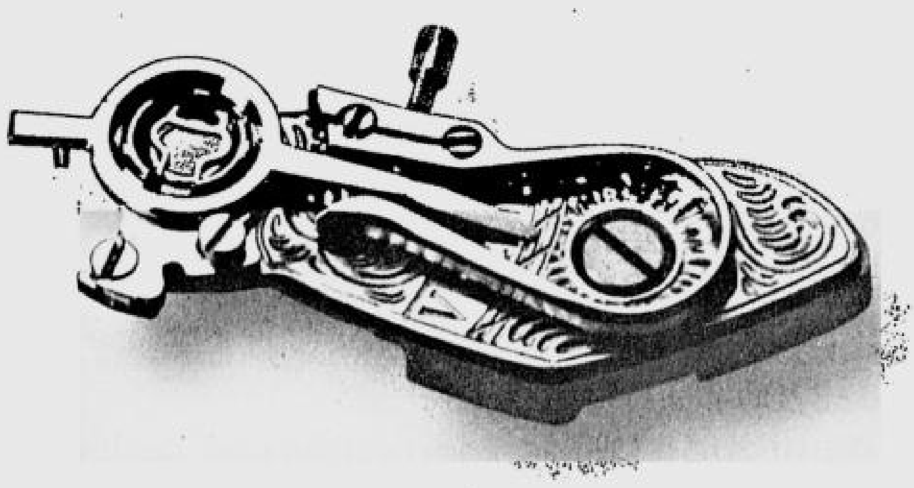

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$2-$3B needed to boost power supply in next 5 years

By Abigail L. Ho

WHILE it may be too late to avoid possible power crises in some parts of the country because of a looming electricity supply-and-demand imbalance, boosting capacity in the country's three main islands now may still prevent massive blackouts in the coming years.

First Generation Holdings Corp. vice president Victor Santos Jr. said yesterday that demand in various parts of the country, particularly in the Visayas and Mindanao, could soon overtake available dependable capacity there and result in intermittent power outages.

He stressed the importance of maintaining at least 20 percent of dependable capacity as part of a particular area's power reserves to prevent these from taking place.

"Breaching the reserve requirement could result in rotating brownouts. It's not necessarily just the lack of capacity that will lead to this, but the lack of reserves. When, for example, a plant trips or has some downtime to allow maintenance, there will be power outages if the reserves are not enough," he said.

He said around $2 billion to $3 billion would be required to bring in additional capacity in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao over the next five years. This amount covered just the cost of setting up or expanding generation plants.

Additional capacity needed in Luzon was placed at 700 megawatts (MW), he said. This should be in place by 2007 to maintain a safe 20-percent power reserve in the area.

As of 2003, peak load—or actual volume of power in Luzon was placed at around 6,000 MW. Santos said this should increase to somewhere below 7,000 MW this year and shoot up to around 8,000 MW by 2007 if actual demand would be met with enough capacity to serve as reserve power.

Demand by that time for the whole of Luzon should reach around 10,000 MW.

In the Visayas and the power-hungry Cebu-Negros-Panay (CNP) grids, the additional capacity should have been in place as early as last year to prevent a power crisis.

Peak load on the CNP grid last year was placed at around 800 MW, already intersecting the available capacity there. Between then and the end of the year, the island groups could experience more power outages as the 20-percent reserve requirement would no longer be maintained.

Cebu, in particular, is currently experiencing daily power outages because of the lack of power to meet its growing electricity demands there.

The province is being groomed as the country's second information technology hub, next to Metro Manila, resulting in even greater power demands.

To address this power supply shortfall, the National Transmission Corp. is working overtime to complete the various grid interconnection and line uprating projects.

These include the $80-million CNP interconnection project and the Leyte-Cebu uprating project, which would double the capacity of electricity transmitted among these islands, particularly from geothermal energy-endowed Leyte.

SBC launches new product

SECURITY Bank Corp. recently introduced its CheckRight automated checking account that provides a more efficient way to monitor check inventories and manage payee lists, thereby allowing a company more time to focus on its core business.

With CheckRight, a company can review account balances instantly over the Internet using DigiBanker, Security Bank's Internet-based corporate banking system, to confirm if funding for their checks is sufficient, or which checks have already been cleared.

An interest-bearing peso checking account, CheckRight also comes with a software package that allows the user to enter check payments information conveniently through a user-friendly interface or by direct upload from the company's accounts payable system.

Aside from enabling companies to print their logo on their checks, CheckRight also 'provides them the ability to instantly move funds from their other Security Bank accounts to fund the CheckRight account using Security DigiBanker.

A definite advantage of CheckRight is its on-line, real-time automatic reconcilement feature, which makes use of a current account statement delivered via e-mail or Internet connection to track cleared checks instantly and effortlessly.

Designed for companies that wanted to automate or further enhance a previous automation of their check payments and reconciliation process, CheckRight allows companies to prepare customized reports easily by exporting CheckRight data directly into their accounting systems or to other off-the-shelf computer applications.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Iloilo
Municipality of Concepcion

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

ITB No. 2004-NCB-PM-001

Date: March 9, 2004

To: All Eligible Suppliers,

The Municipality of Concepcion is a recipient of a grant from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) towards the financing of the Construction Cost for the first Agrarian Reform Community Project (ARCP) in Barangay Agnaga and Barangay Calamigan. The amount intends to cover eligible payments for the Concreting/Rehabilitation of Junction National Road Sitio Agnaga Proper – Sitio Belen, Calamigan.

This invitation is open to all suppliers from eligible sources throughout the country. The Municipal Government of Concepcion, Iloilo and its implementing partners, DAR – ADB invites sealed offers/quotations from eligible suppliers for furnishing the supply of various construction materials amounting to Six Million Six Hundred Fourteen Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Two Pesos (PhP6,614,882.00) and equipment amounting to Three Million Two Hundred Ninety One Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Seven Pesos (Php3,291,927) for the Concreting/Rehab. of JNR Sitio Proper Agnaga-Sitio Belen Calamigan.

Bid documents may be purchased at the ARCP Local Project Office, Concepcion, Iloilo for a non-refundable fee of Php1,200.00 for each set on **March 22 & 23, 2004** from **8:00 a.m.** to **5:00 p.m.** Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at the Municipal Session Hall on **March 26, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.** Interested suppliers may obtain further information at the same address.

Offers or quotations shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after opening of quotations and must be accompanied by a bid security of two and one half (2-1/2%) percent of total quoted price, and shall be delivered to The Chairperson Pre/Post-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee, Municipality of Concepcion, Province of Iloilo on or before **April 12, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.**

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids which may found disadvantageous to the government.

Very truly yours,

(Sgd.) **Engr. Eva Mae V. Parreñas**
Chairperson
Pre/Post-qualification, Bids and Awards Committee
Municipality of Concepcion, Iloilo

(PDI–March 12 & 19, 2004)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-MMSD 2004-006

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements:

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I	April 5, 2004 2:00 p.m. Kañao Room	Mechanical Parts for Romblon DPP	PB040405-MMAD0658	P 1,885,799.00
II		Mechanical Parts for Tablas DPP, Camotes Bantayan "MAN"	PB030725-MMMT8742 (PB2)	14,411,747.00
III	April 7, 2004 10:00 a.m. Kañao Room	Hauling Services & Rental of Storage Tanks including Depot Pumping Facilities	PB040407-MMSB0659	8,520,000.00
IV		Supply of Labor & Materials for Fuel Services to SPUG-Eastern Visayas Plants	PB031211-MMMT9965 (PB2)	1,996,560.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I-II	March 24, 2004	2:00 p.m.	Kañao Function Room
Schedule III-IV	March 24, 2004	3:00 p.m.	Kañao Function Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No. 9245357/9245477 upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP500.00 per schedule starting on **March 12, 2004.** No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by PSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/executive in accordance with the IRR of Repubic Act No. 9184.

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One Percent (1%), Bank Guarantee - One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids, and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - March 12 & 19, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-009

PD Ref. No.: PB040209-EL0024

1. The NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
    a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
    b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
    c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
    d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract. Provided, however, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
    e. Cooperative duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of:

Schedule	Description	Quantity	Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
I	DESKTOP PC	55 UNITS	P 4,675,000.00
II	MOBILE PC	12 UNITS	P 1,500,000.00
III	PC MONITOR	43 UNITS	P 254,000.00
IV	LCD MONITOR	1 UNIT	P 18,500.00
V	CAD/CAE WORK STATION	4 UNITS	P 800,000.00
VI	DIGITAL CAMERA	2 UNITS	P 60,000.00
VII	NETWORK CAMERA	1 UNIT	P 17,000.00
VIII	HIGH QUALITY WEB CAMERA	3 UNITS	P 105,000.00
IX	LASERJET PRINTER (NETWORK)	9 UNITS	P 432,000.00
X	LASERJET PRINTER (STANDALONE)	1 UNIT	P 35,000.00
XI	INKJET PRINTER (STANDALONE)	7 UNITS	P 105,000.00
XII	PORTABLE PRINTER	1 UNIT	P 10,000.00
XIII	PRINTER, DOT MATRIX	1 UNIT	P 35,000.00
XIV	PLOTTER	3 UNITS	P 750,000.00
XV	FACSIMILE	2 UNITS	P 36,000.00
XVI	MULTIMEDIA PROJECTOR	1 UNIT	P 210,000.00
XVII	MOBILE LCD PROJECTOR	1 UNIT	P 132,000.00
XVIII	SCANNER	4 UNITS	P 60,000.00
XIX	UNINTERRUPTIBLE POWER SUPPLY	4 UNITS	P 28,000.00
XX	MULTI-POINT VIDEO CONFERENCING	1 UNIT	P 950,000.00
XXI	RACKMOUNT SERVER	2 UNITS	P 600,000.00
XXII	OFFSITE BACKUP SERVER	1 UNIT	P 500,000.00
XXIII	FILE SERVER	1 UNIT	P 450,000.00
XXIV	PC SERVER	2 UNITS	P 1,200,000.00
XXV	PROTOCOL ANALYZER	2 UNITS	P 800,000.00
XXVI	BACKUP STORAGE MANAGEMENT SYS.	1 LOT	P 225,068.00
XXVII	SWITCH 24-PORT	2 PCS.	P 94,000.00
XXVIII	SWITCH, DATA TRANSFER	2 PCS.	P 2,000.00
XXIX	DUAL SPEED HUB	4 PCS.	P 252,000.00
XXX	1000 BASE-SX GBIC	4 PCS.	P 116,000.00
XXXI	MEMORY FOR COMPAQ PROLIANT ML530	8 UNITS	P 123,200.00
XXXII	MEMORY FOR COMPAQ PROLIANT ML370	2 UNITS	P 120,810.00
XXXIII	MEMORY 256MB	40 UNITS	P 100,000.00
XXXIV	PROCESSOR	40 UNITS	P 380,000.00
XXXV	MOTHERBOARD	40 UNITS	P 184,000.00
XXXVI	DLT EXTERNAL DRIVE	1 UNIT	P 230,060.00
XXXVII	HARD DRIVE	40 UNITS	P 148,000.00
XXXVIII	FLOPPY DISK DRIVE	40 UNITS	P 18,000.00
XXXIX	CD-RW/DVD COMBO DRIVE	40 UNITS	P 160,000.00
XL	HARD DISK	2 UNITS	P 50,500.00
XLI	CASING	40 UNITS	P 72,000.00
XLII	VIDEO CARD	40 UNITS	P 80,000.00
XLIII	MS WINDOWS XP PROFESSIONAL	20 UNITS	P 180,000.00
XLIV	ISO17799/BS7799 TOOL KIT	1 UNIT	P 58,000.00
XLV	SOFTWARE, NETWORK MANAGEMENT SECURITY	1 PACK	P 484,000.00
XLVI	56K EXTERNAL ANALOGUE MODEM	30 UNITS	P 420,000.00
	TOTAL		P 18,843,528.00

3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that will be issued.

   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is **P18,843,528.00** to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **March 12, 2004** to **April 7, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **March 31, 2004** at **2:00 p.m.** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **1:30 p.m. of April 12, 2004** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said late. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of Republic Act 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Corporation.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) ANTONIO G. LABAYANI
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 12 & 19, 2004)

NOTICE

Effective March 15, 2004, you may contact the National Transmission Corporation Head Office through this trunkline number:

(02) 981-2100

(connecting all departments)

Corporate Communication
981-2143/926-1844

Bids & Contracts Management
981-2213

Purchasing
981-2206 / 981-2207

Sub-transmission Divestment
921-4231 / 920-0102

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation
Serving the nation thru reliable grid operation

Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road,
Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines
Website: www.transco.ph
E-mail: corpcomm@transco.ph

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 11, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16.5	16.75	16.5	16.75	33,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44.5	45	44.5	45	135,100
China Banking Corp.	655	655	655	655	6,150
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38	38.5	38	38.5	267,900
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.58	0.59	0.58	0.58	130,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25	24.75	24.75	133,300
Philippine National Bank	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	1,200
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	10,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	2,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	180	180	180	180	150
Manulife Financial Corp.	1900	1950	1900	1950	1,110
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	133,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	150	150	150	150	1,100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1490	1490	1470	1470	600
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	5,200
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	800,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	855	855	850	850	128,480
Ipeople Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	50,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.037	0.035	0.037	500,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.64	1.72	1.64	1.66	19,607,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	905	915	905	910	243,210
Ivantage Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.34	140,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	14,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	17,500
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	31.5	31.5	31.5	216,000
Petron Corp.	3	3	2.9	2.9	829,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	1,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	90,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	17,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3	3.05	3	3.05	22,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	70,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.6	13,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Cement Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	260,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.38	1,621,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	4,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.75	190,600
RFM Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.62	0.62	60,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56	56.5	56	56.5	47,100
San Miguel Corp. B	68	68.5	68	68.5	372,500
Universal Robina Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	420,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6	6	5.8	5.8	2,472,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3	3	2.9	2.95	2,776,000
APC Group Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	14,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	40,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	40,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.56	1,270,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.08	0.1	0.08	0.1	400,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	800,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	800,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	600,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	23.5	23.5	23	23	362,400
Ionics, Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.34	1.36	165,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.84	1.86	1.84	1.84	115,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.02	1.04	941,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	10,050,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	20,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	26,400
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	15,200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Matsushita Elec Phil. Corp.	8	8	8	8	5,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.47	0.5	0.46	0.5	1,490,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	10,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
WGA - Preferred	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	22,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	405	405	405	405	40
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	1,783,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	15,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	280,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	570,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	1,914,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	840,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.1	200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	38,895,000
MINING					
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	19,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.205	1,070,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	70,000
Omico Corp.	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	10,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	200,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	10,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.0028	0.0028	7,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	80,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	40,000

DISCLOSURES

METRO Alliance Holdings and Equities Corp. will buy 1,000 shares of Landco for a 40-percent stake in the company from BP Holdings International B.V., Petronas Philippines Inc. and Sumimoto Corp.

* * *

THE EXECUTIVE committee of **China Banking Corp.** approved the promotion of Ramon Zamora from first vice president to senior vice president and head of international banking group.

* * *

SUN Life Financial Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 19 with stockholders of record as of April 2 entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange confirms that it has yet to receive word from **Caltex Philippines Inc. and Shell Petroleum Corp.** on their plans for a possible public offering. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

PNOC SHIPPING & TRANSPORT CORPORATION

PNOC
The Energy Company

S & L Building 1500 Roxas Boulevard, Manila Philippines
P.O. Box EA-469, Ermita 1000, Manila
Tel. Nos. 525-9271 to 80
Fax No.. 525-8376

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PNOC SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT CORPORATION (PSTC) invites eligible bidders to submit sealed bids for the DRYDOCKING AND REPAIRS OF MOTOR TANKER (MT) GEN. ANTONIO LUNA. Following are the vessel's particulars:

LOA : 88.50 M
Breadth : 14.00 M
Draft, DLWL : 6.00 M
Depth, MLD : 5.04 M
Gross Tonnage : 1,720 MT
Deadweight : 3,800 MT
Year Built : 1994
Classification : KROSOC-OIL TANKER (FBC)

This invitation is open to all contractors accredited with PNOC Shipping and Transport Corporation (PSTC). Interested contractors not yet accredited or pre-qualified with PSTC may apply for pre-qualification in order to be eligible.

Bid documents stipulating detailed work specifications, instructions, terms and conditions shall be available for issuance to accredited contractors on 15 March 2004 to 29 March 2004 upon payment of non-refundable fee of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P500.00) from PSTC Contracts Administration Office, Room 718 of the above address.

Deadline for the submission of sealed bids is on 13 April 2004 at 2:00 p.m. and bids shall be opened at 3:00 p.m. of the same day of the bid deadline.

All bids must be accompanied by a bid bond equivalent to ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (P100,000.00) to be secured from accredited bonding companies of PSTC. Criteria to be used for evaluation of tenders are detailed in the Instruction to Bidders.

Post qualification of the winning bidder shall be undertaken. For this purpose, the winning bidder shall be required to present legal, technical and financial documents detailed in the Instruction to Bidders.

For inquiries, please contact Ms. Jocelyn G. Atotubo at telephone no. 525-92-88 or Mr. Raoul Trinidad at 525-92-89. You can also send your e-mail at rmtrinidad@hotmail.com or you can fax at 525-83-76.

A pre-bid conference is scheduled on 01 April 2004 at 2:00 in the afternoon at the PSTC Board Room, at the same address.

PNOC Shipping and Transport Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids thereof, to waive any formality found therein, or to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any contractor whose bid is considered most advantageous to PSTC and to the government.

(Sgd.) JOCELYN G. ATOTUBO
Chairperson, Bids and Awards
Committee

(PDI - March 12, 2004)

Brokers ask court to stop new PSE investors from voting

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A GROUP of stockbrokers has asked the Pasig regional trial court to stop new investors from voting their shares in Saturday's Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) elections.

This was ahead of an emergency PSE board meeting to take place today.

Stockbroker Ismael Cruz, who is allied with the Coyiuto group, said a case was filed with the Pasig court at about 4 p.m. yesterday seeking to stop new investors from voting on Saturday.

The new investors hold 40 percent of the PSE's outstanding stocks.

Cruz said the case was filed against the new investors and the PSE's 15 incumbent directors. Cruz and brokers Filomeno Francisco and Edgardo Guevara said they were opposed to the sale of the PSE's 40-percent unissued shares to private institutions for a number of reasons.

The transaction will raise an estimated P733 million from the sale of primary and secondary shares to the Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS), PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund, San Miguel Retirement Fund, Kim Eng Investment Ltd., KE Strategic Pte. Ltd., A. Soriano Corp. and Equinox Partners.

The opposing brokers said the private placement was allegedly "consummated in undue haste" and lacked transparency.

The deal also allegedly violated pre-emptive rights of existing stockholders recognized under the Corporation Code.

Elections that will decide control of the PSE also heated up with an expected proxy fight, INQUIRER sources said.

Sources close to stockbroker Vivian Yuchengco said her group had obtained the proxies from SMC Retirement Fund, which holds 9.1 percent of the PSE's outstanding shares.

Sources also said it might be a tight race with veteran stockbroker Robert Coyiuto Jr. obtaining close to 80 of broker proxies of the 184 broker stockholders of the exchange.

Incumbent chair Alicia Arroyo, meanwhile, is reportedly being backed by the ATR Kim Eng Group, which recently subscribed to 9.1 percent of the PSE or 4.55 percent each for Kim Eng Investment Ltd. and KE Strategic Pte Ltd.

PLDT Beneficial Trust and the GSIS, each holding 9.1 percent under a private placement deal with the PSE, are expected to vote their shares on Saturday.

CURRENCIES

March 11, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.817194	1.000000	56.2020
Japan	Yen	0.007380	0.009031	0.5076
United Kingdom	Pound	1.474708	1.804600	101.4221
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104860	0.128317	7.2117
Switzerland	Franc	0.634911	0.776940	43.6656
Canada	Dollar	0.616936	0.754945	42.4294
Singapore	Dollar	0.477222	0.583976	32.8206
Australia	Dollar	0.611077	0.747775	42.0265
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.167738	2.652661	149.0849
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217930	0.266681	14.9880
Brunei	Dollar	0.475832	0.582276	32.7251
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000117	0.0066
Thailand	Baht	0.020752	0.025394	1.4272
UAE	Dirham	0.222499	0.272272	15.3022
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.223700	68.7744
Argentina	Peso	0.281791	0.344828	19.3800
Brazil	Real	0.283060	0.346380	19.4672
Denmark	Kroner	0.134184	0.164201	9.2284
India	Rupee	0.018095	0.022143	1.2445
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215080	0.263193	14.7920
Mexico	New Peso	0.074500	0.091166	5.1237
New Zealand	Dollar	0.543672	0.665292	37.3907
Norway	Kroner	0.114991	0.140714	7.9084
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014281	0.017476	0.9822
South Africa	Rand	0.122818	0.150292	8.4467
Korea	Won	0.000698	0.000854	0.0480
Sweden	Kroner	0.108927	0.133294	7.4914
Syria	Pound	0.018547	0.022696	1.2756
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024570	0.030066	1.6898
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000427	0.000522	0.0293

Metrobank, HK bank eye China ventures

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S biggest lender, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., has teamed up with Hong Kong's largest private lender, Bank of East Asia Ltd., to scout for fresh business opportunities in mainland China.

In a statement yesterday, Metrobank said it had signed a "business cooperation agreement" with BEA as the two banks had a "strong mutual interest in exploring opportunities for developing business in greater China."

Metrobank said the cooperation framework would expand its international reach and enable it to respond to rising demand from its corporate customers for banking and related services in China.

BEA, through its well-established branch network in China, offers a comprehensive range of banking services, including company accounts, yuan-US dollar loan facilities, remittance, trade finance, project finance and consultancy services.

For its part, Metrobank will provide financial services to BEA customers doing business in the Philippines.

"BEA customers will benefit from Metrobank's vast network of branches across the country and its strong base in the corporate and middle market," Metrobank said.

Metrobank currently operates one branch in China's financial and commercial hub Shanghai. It is the first and only Philippine bank authorized by the Chinese government to operate in the area.

Great Deals, Big Savings

Now, you can purchase Acer products without any interest rate on your BPI Credit Card only at Silicon Valley!

centrino
MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

NEW ARRIVAL

Acer Aspire 2001WLCi Laptop

15.4" Widescreen WXGA Display

◂ Clear vision
◂ Cinema vision
◂ Brighter screen and wider viewing angle

BEST BUY P 8,750.00 (12 Months)

- Intel® Centrino Mobile Technology
  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor 1.4GHz supports Enhanced Intel® Speedstep Technology
  - Intel 855PM chipset with 400MHz Front Side Bus
  - Integrated Intel® PRO/Wireless 2100 (802.11b)
- ATI MOBILITY™ RADEON™ 9200 (64MB)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home
- 256MB DDR "Faster Than SDRAM"
- 40GB Hard Disk Drive
- DVD/CDRW Combo Drive
- 4-in-1 Card Reader, Infrared Port, S-video TV-out
- Lithium-Ion Battery (Use up to 6hrs. max.)

With ACER CARRYING CASE

- Solid Aluminum Casing
- Built-in Subwoofer
- Slot Loading
- Instant-on Arcade Button

Acer recommends Microsoft® Windows® XP

TravelMate 291XCi

NEW
Intel® Pentium® M Processor 1.4GHz
Wireless Mobility with extra long battery life

- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology
  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor 1.4GHz
  - Intel® 855GM Chipset w/ 400 MHz FSB
  - Integrated Intel® PRO/Wireless 2100 (802.11b)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home
- 256MB DDR, 40GB Hard Disk Drive
- 24x CD-RW + DVD-Rom Drive
- 14.1" XGA TFT LCD
- USB 2.0 x3, Infrared Port, TV-out, Firewire Port
- 56Kbps, 10/100 Mbps Ethernet
- Lithium-Ion Battery
- Norton® Anti-Virus

With ACER CARRYING CASE

BEST BUY P 7,242.00 (12 Months)

TravelMate C111TCi

NEW
WITH 1 PC. ADD'L BATTERY PACK
Integrated Bluetooth

- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology
  - Ultra Low Voltage Intel® Pentium® M 1GHz; 1MB L2 cache
  - Intel® 855GM Chipset w/ 400 MHz FSB
  - Integrated Intel® PRO/Wireless 2100 (802.11b)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Tablet PC Edition
- 512MB DDR RAM upgradable to 2GB
- 40GB Hard Disk Drive
- CDRW/DVD Combo Drive External
- LCD rotates to convert from Notebook to Tablet PC Mode
- 10.4" TFT LCD Supporting Pen-based Input
- Integrated 3D VGA w/ DVMT Technology
- 10/100 Mbps Fast Ethernet, Wake-on LAN ready

With ACER CARRYING CASE

BEST BUY P 10,667.00 (12 Months)

TravelMate 662LCi

NEW
Intel® Pentium® M Processor 1.5GHz
Wireless Mobility with extra long battery life

- Intel® Centrino™ Mobile Technology
  - Intel® Pentium® M Processor 1.5GHz
  - Intel® 855GM chipset w/ 400MHz FSB
  - Integrated Intel® PRO/Wireless 2100 (802.11b)
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home
- 512MB, 60GB w/ Disk Anti-Shock Protection
- Integrated 24/10/8/24x DVD/CDRW Combo
- SmartCard Technology For Data Security
- USB 2.0 x4, Firewire Port, Infrared, TV-out
- 4-in-1 Media Card Reader (SD, MMC, Smart Media, Memory Stick)
- 15.0" SXGA+ TFT LCD (38.1 cms.)
- 56Kbps, 10/100 Mbps LAN, Norton Anti-Virus

With ACER CARRYING CASE

BEST BUY P 8,750.00 (12 Months)

TravelMate 252ELC-H

NEW
512MB Memory
15.0" XGA TFT 40GB Hard Disk
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.6GHz

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 2.6GHz
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home
- 256MB DDR + 256MB (Additional)
- 40GB Hard Disk Drive
- 24x CD-RW + DVD-Rom Combo Drive
- 15.0" XGA TFT LCD
- 4 USB 2.0 Ports
- Infrared Port
- 56Kbps, 10/100 Mbps Ethernet
- 1.44MB FDD
- Lithium-Ion Battery
- Norton® Anti-Virus

With ACER CARRYING CASE

BEST BUY P 7,075.00 (12 Months)

TravelMate 243XC

NEW
DVD/CD-RW Combo Drive
Intel® Celeron® Processor 2.5GHz

- Intel® Celeron® Processor 2.5GHz
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home
- 256MB DDR "Faster Than SDRAM"
- 8X DVD + 24X (10/8/24) CDRW Combo Drive
- 40GB Hard Disk
- 14.1" XGA TFT LCD
- 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- Built-in 56Kbps Fax/Modem
- 10/100 Mbps Ethernet
- Lithium-Ion Battery
- Norton® Anti-Virus

With ACER CARRYING CASE

BEST BUY P 5,825.00 (12 Months)

Aspire RC528F Home PC

Use the Super Dial and remote control to navigate on the new exciting entertainment modes.

Aspire RC928F Home PC

- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor with HT Technology 2.8GHz
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home
- Intel® 865G Chipset
- 256MB DDR, 40GB Hard Disk
- DVD/CDRW Combo Drive
- Built-in 56Kbps Fax/Modem
- 10/100M Ethernet
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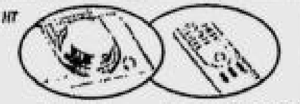

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Task force formed to review NSO data

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT is creating an inter-agency task force that will regularly evaluate data released by the National Statistics Office in view of recent errors in the reporting of exports figure.

Romulo Neri, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, told reporters that the creation of the task force was necessary to prevent erroneous reporting of essential public information.

"The task force is now being created and will start to function as soon as possible," Neri said.

Neri said the task force would be composed of representatives from the Department of Finance, the Bureau of Customs, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Department of Trade and Industry, the National Statistics Coordination Board and the NSO.

The November exports data disseminated by the NSO did not include about $700 million worth of electronics exports. The error made it appear that the export sector posted a revenue decline for the month when the actual figure actually grew.

RP power rates among highest in the world, says FirstGen study

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE residential and industrial electricity rates remained among the highest in the world, even after the government capped the National Power Corp.'s purchased power adjustment at 40 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in 2002.

Data gathered by Lopez-led First Generation Holdings Corp., which covered 22 countries, showed that the country ranked seventh highest in residential and third highest in industrial power rates, even surpassing those in the United States and the United Kingdom.

The FirstGen study indicated that local residential rates, pegged at around 12 US cents per kWh, was only cheaper than the rates charged in six other countries: Switzerland, Germany, Portugal, Netherlands, Japan and Denmark.

On the industrial side, the Philippines charged the second highest electricity rate in Asia, next to Japan, at around 9 US cents per kWh.

Local industrial power rates, First Gen president and chief operating officer Federico Lopez said in a briefing yesterday, could still go down if the government would be willing to jack up residential rates.

"There's much room for industrial rates to go down. If we remove the cross-subsidies, our industries will become more competitive. Many industry groups from all parts of the country are always naming high power rates as their biggest concern," he said.

Distribution utility Manila Electric Co., also a Lopez-led firm, had in place inter-class subsidies as promulgated by a May 2003 Energy Regulatory Commission decision.

Under the inter-class cross-subsidies, the firm's extra-large industrial customers paid an extra 63 centavos per kWh to subsidize household and small industrial clients.

Removing the subsidies, he said, would not only bring down the cost of power for the industrial sector but also reveal the true costs that these customers had to pay for.

Republic Act No. 9136 or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, provides for the removal of these cross-subsidies within three years of the effectivity of the law.

Big bucks can come in small boxes

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

SUCCESS STORY

FOOD and beverage expert Leo C. Wassmer III lived in New York in the 1980s and he noticed how New Yorkers would ride on the subway or walk along the city's fabled streets with a box of Chinese take-out on one hand.

Seeing how Filipinos loved Chinese food and the way the pace of urban lifestyle was steadily increasing, he thought it made good business sense to bring the concept to the Philippines.

But the idea did not immediately transform into bricks and mortar because Wassmer was bogged down by details such as where to get the boxes, what kind of food to prepare and who to employ.

Wassmer's idea finally came to fruition in 1988 when he got married to Joy Arambulo. The two then pursued the project together.

First-born

The result was Singkit, an all-delivery and take-out outlet serving Chinese food. It was their first-born, so to speak.

Butch, as Wassmer is fondly called by friends, was in charge of the operations, given his long experience in the hotel, restaurant, resort and club management both here and abroad, while Joy took care of the details, particularly in the areas of sales and marketing.

Their concept was to offer the public a whole range of freshly cooked Chinese food, the kinds that are usually found in fine-dining restaurants, served in a box made of food-grade paper.

He said he spent a lot of time on choosing the right type of packaging because he wanted to come up with the kind that would keep hot meals hot and cold items cold. They also had to make sure that it was safe enough to store food.

Butch and Joy were just as meticulous in coming up with Singkit's signature dishes on its menu. The aim was to come up with the best Chinese dishes that appeal to Filipino taste.

"We developed our dishes with the Filipino taste in mind. That made our food unique and we also made sure that we only used quality ingredients. We do not use monosodium glutamate, for instance, which makes our food more nutritious and better tasting," Wassmer told the INQUIRER.

SINGKIT'S party fare

SINGKIT to go

Instant hit

The couple put up their first branch along Pasong Tamo in Makati City in 1991 and Wassmer said Singkit's dishes were an instant hit with the office workers and residents in the area.

Joy personally went through the buildings, floor by floor, to introduce Singkit's dishes to the neighborhood. She also handled the calls that came in droves especially during lunch and dinner time.

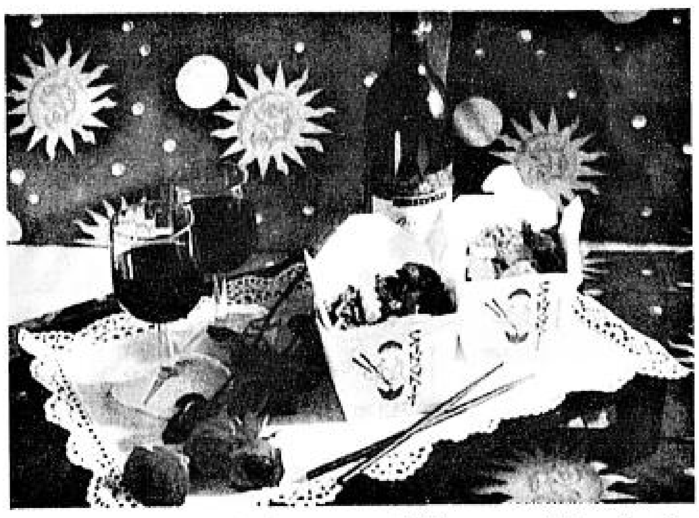
Singkit had only eight items on its menu in the beginning. These include such Chinese food favorites as lechon kawali, beef broccoli, sweet and sour pork, pata tim and pansit canton.

"We really did not want a long menu because we concentrated on items that we can cook really well. We wanted to be consistent in the quality of our food," Wassmer said.

Their customers did not let them down and for the next eight years, Wassmer said they had no reason to complain.

The success of the first branch prompted the couple to later expand to Pasig to cater to the employees and residents in the Ortigas business district.

Wassmer said the two branches continued to do well after close to 13 years in business but admitted that they have to stay on their toes because of increasing competition and the decline in the purchasing power of the Filipinos.



WHO says couples can't enjoy a romantic dinner over Chinese food?

They also maintained their hands-on approach to management even if Butch is also busy as CEO of a food company that caters to golf clubs such as Southwoods. Joy, for her part, is working full time as part of the communications department of the Makati Shangri-la Hotel.

New ball game

"The ball game has changed completely because there are now a lot of delivery outlets out there. We keep ahead by maintaining the level of our service and of course the quality of our food. The food is what has kept us going all these years," he says.

From the original eight items, Singkit's menu now includes other Chinese favorites such as beancurd Szechuan, glass noodles, chicken with quail eggs, Mandarin balls, lumpiang Shanghai, bitter melon with beef, shrimps with peas and casuey and fish with pickling sauce.

The items come in budget boxes that sell for P50 to P70 each, to packages good for eight persons that sell for a little over P1,000. Singkit is also an alternative caterer in meetings and small parties for groups of 18 to 22 persons, with its food package costing only around P3,500.

Wassmer said it took a lot of effort to maintain consistency.

But it pays off in the end as consistency of quality often tells the difference between food outlets that close down and those, like Singkit, that live on despite the odds.

EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Philtown set to construct Metroclub high-rise condo

PHILIPPINE Townships Inc. (Philtown), the property subsidiary of food giant RFM Corp., has signed an agreement with The Metropolitan Club (Metroclub) to build a high-rise residential condominium on the club's property in Makati City.

During the project launching ceremonies on March 9, Jose A. Concepcion III, Philtown chair and CEO, and Carlos C. Syquia, Metroclub chair, also agreed to a plan for the extensive redevelopment of the club's sports facilities.

To be called The Metropolitan, the condominium will rise on the Metroclub compound on Estrella Street in Makati, directly in front of the Rockwell commercial area. It will also offer prospective residents the use of a wide range of athletic and recreational facilities which Metroclub will redevelop for its members.

Concepcion said Philtown has commissioned the architectural firm of Recio Casas to prepare the master development plan for the project.

The Metropolitan will be 35 stories high, and consist of studio, one- and two-bedroom units, each of which will come with the privilege to use Metroclub facilities.

The master plan also provides for the upgrading and redevelopment of Metroclub facilities. Syquia said Metroclub has agreed with Philtown in creating "a full sports and athletic club," which will feature tennis, badminton and basketball courts, lap and kiddie swimming pools, bowling alleys, billiards, a fully equipped gym, exercise and fitness rooms for pilates, yoga, spinning, kick-boxing and aerobics.

It will also have function rooms and facilities for casual and al-fresco dining.

Philtown is the outfit that built the One McKinley Place and Fairways Tower at the Bonifacio Global City.

SMC starts regional expansion

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN Miguel Corp. will make and distribute its full range of food and beverages using its first Thai factory, Southeast Asia's largest food group said yesterday as it announced the start of work on the facility and the beginning of its regional expansion.

Called San Miguel (Thailand) Co. Ltd., the manufacturing complex is located in the Amata City (Rayong) industrial estate in Thailand. It will manufacture and distribute in Thailand SMC products such as beverage, processed food and snacks, and animal feeds.

Under the first phase of its Thai venture, SMC will build a non-alcoholic beverage facility at the Amata industrial estate.

Sources said that while SMC was planning to put up a brewery in Thailand within the next five years, the beer business was not an immediate priority due to the stiff competition in that country.

SMC is seen to compete with strong local brewers led by Thai Beverages PCL, maker of market leader Chang Beer. Further, the company may face restrictions since alcohol advertising is banned on television before 10 p.m.

Last year, SMC bought a 100-hectare industrial complex from Amata City Co. Ltd. for $20 million.

"SMC views Thailand as a strategic investment site due to its huge beverage market, competitive investment and tax incentives, well-developed infrastructure and proximity to other markets like Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar," the company said in a statement.

SMC has so far invested $50 million in its venture in Thailand.

Thailand's economy is expected to grow at 6.7 percent growth this year in terms of gross domestic product.

Similar expansion is expected to start within the year in Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Taiwan, China and Malaysia, a company statement said.

The company, owned 15 percent by Japan's Kirin Brewery Co., has previously said it would spend $100 million in each of the seven Asian markets it is targeting for expansion. *With a report from Reuters*

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HEADTURNERS AP

New Toyota cars await shipment to their final destination in the United States. The US trade deficit with Japan narrowed to US$5.3 billion in January. US exports to that country, valued at US$4 billion, marked the lowest level in a year.

Saudi to cut oil supply in April

SEOUL/LONDON—SAUDI Arabia on Wednesday told leading crude customers it was cutting supplies for April, implementing part of a February agreement among members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to reduce oil production, traders said.

But some customers of Saudi Arabia, Opec's top producer, were spared cuts, and industry sources said stubbornly high oil prices appeared to have persuaded Riyadh not to fully implement its part of the Opec deal which, on paper, would have required Riyadh to lower output by as much as 800,000 barrels a day (bpd).

Industry sources estimated that the reductions, shouldered mostly by integrated major companies and Asian buyers, would indicate a worldwide Saudi cut of no more than 250,000 bpd.

State oil company Saudi Aramco informed its biggest buyers that in April, supply will be reduced to 8 to 11 percent.

Aramco sliced April export allocations to the four world oil majors to 30 to 35 percent below full term contract volume, from about 20 to 25 percent below contract volume in March, the traders said.

"They're serious about it this time," said a dealer at one major company.

Japanese and South Korean buyers were told to expect a reduction in April of about 3 percent.

"The cut was expected in line with the Opec agreement, but will have an impact on the market," said a trader at a Japanese refiner.

Some of Riyadh's customers will get unchanged volumes.

Smaller European and US refiners, which buy on a delivered basis, were spared the Saudi reductions for April. Their export allocations are expected to hold steady at about 35 percent below contract, traders said.

Opec members agreed at a meeting in February to eliminate 1.5 million barrels a day and cut another one million barrels daily from quota limits in April.

Saudi accounts for a third of Opec's output. This would mean that Saudi needs to cut just over 800,000 bpd of the total agreed 2.5 million bpd Opec cut to meet a new quota in April of 7.64 million bpd.

Saudi supplies to its foreign joint venture refining partners and its domestic refineries, totaling some 3.5 million bpd, are not part of Aramco's monthly export nomination procedure.

Industry sources said high oil prices meant some continued Saudi leakage above quota was inevitable, and necessary to prevent prices from rising further.

US crude traded near $36.50 a barrel on Wednesday and Opec's reference crude basket has been valued above the group's official $22-$28 target range.

While Opec appears to have done little to curb quota busting in March, several producers have now told clients to expect lower in supplies for April. Saudi Arabia joins Iran, the UAE and Nigeria among those that traders say are implementing at least part of the cuts.

Opec ministers say they are trying to avoid a price fall during the second quarter when world demand ebbs, but consumer countries have complained the cartel is propping up prices with unfair restrictions. *Reuters*

Asian stocks continue to tumble

SINGAPORE—Asian stocks extended losses on Thursday following another sell-off on Wall Street after a record high US trade deficit fueled doubts over the strength of an economic recovery.

Despite an unexpected deficit of US$43.1 billion in January, the dollar shot up on profit-taking in most major currencies except the yen, which was supported by fears of Japanese intervention to protect an export-led economic recovery.

Japanese shares ended down 1.2 percent at 11,297.04, hurt by a 3.7-percent fall in Canon Inc. and a 1.3-percent drop in Sony Corp. A halt in the yen's fall also prompted selling in exporters. Honda Motor dropped 3.6 percent.

Analysts said although Japanese stocks had become less dependent on US shares, stability on Wall Street was necessary.

"Last week, we expected the Nikkei would clear the 12,000 mark as early as this week, but that scenario was based on hopes that US stocks would stabilize," said Masayoshi Okamoto, head of dealing at Jujiya Securities.

"But without that, Tokyo stocks can't move higher, especially tech stocks, even though people have started talking more about economic recovery," Okamoto added.

The record US trade deficit and lingering concern over weak jobs data still weighed on Wall Street.

The Dow Jones industrial average ended down 1.53 percent at 10,296.89, canceling out gains for the year, while the S&P 500 Index fell 1.46 percent to 1,123.89.

The Dow has erased its 2004 gains to fall 1.5 percent since the end of 2003, but it is still up about 39 percent from March 2003, when it hit a six-year low. The S&P 500 Index has risen more than 40 percent over the 52 weeks since it too hit a six-year low. *Reuters*

Asian retail seen doing well in '04

SEOUL—Shares of Asian retailers are expected to perform strongly in 2004 as buoyant economies encourage consumers to dig into savings or flex their credit cards.

Calling an end to a seven-year consumption recession in much of Asia, analysts predict an extended upturn in spending as export-led economic recoveries boost wages and cut unemployment.

Asian consumption has been in the doldrums since the 1997-98 financial crisis as indebted consumers have cut spending and raised savings.

The region's biggest retailers, in Japan, are turning the corner after years of deflation and a deep slump in consumer spending.

Falling unemployment and rising wages have convinced investors that the benefits of an economic upturn are filtering down to consumers. Japanese wages rose in January for the first time in eight months, while retail sales rose an unexpectedly strong 3.5 percent from December.

China, Asia's second-biggest economy behind Japan, expects retail sales to rise 9.5 percent this year after climbing 9.1 percent and 8.8 percent in 2003 and in 2002 respectively.

Analysts point to Hong Kong as a beneficiary of increasing Chinese appetite for goods.

Beijing began allowing Chinese citizens to visit the territory more freely last summer. Previously they had to join tour groups.

"We expect strong momentum in retail sales numbers going forward, given the growth of the mainland's 'individual visit' scheme and improving sentiment driven by stronger job recovery and rising asset prices," UBS analyst Jonathan Anderson said.

An upswing in consumer spending is also evident in Thailand. Its economy is expected to grow at between 7 and 8 percent this year, after a 6.7-percent rise in 2003, the fastest growth in eight years, a Thai government agency forecast.

In Singapore, where consumer spending accounts for 44 percent of the city state's gross domestic product, retailers enjoyed a better-than-expected 8.2 percent in 2003. *Reuters*

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BELAIR 2-5BR Lots Also Avbl Kaka 8744449/0917-8311323

MANILA

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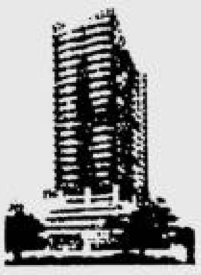

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FA 78.90-103.25m²
w/ provision for attic
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CONDO/TWNHSE

QUEZON CITY

CUBAO 1.5M No Int. 9132224

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TWNHSE

MAKATI

1.6M C5 Nr The Fort
12T/mo. or 3Yrs No Int. or 10% D.P. LIPAT AGAD 2-4BR 15min Fr Mkti 0917-8313226

MKT NR AYALA
BnewTwnhse/3stry/3br/2tb/grge
P3.280M 8903461 loc 34

4BR 3TB P2.9M CONDO
RFO OR 10%DP MOVE-IN 15MIN. TO MKT 2-5BR AVAIL 1ST CLASS ALSO IN ORTIGAS 873-6426 • 0919-6375053

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New Condos Studio 1-3BR Lobby 6714421•09175279121

MANILA

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MANDALUYONG

123br. Condo RFO 10%DP to move-in w/ indoor playground & pool Landscape gardens 0916-5945185

1.8M BNew 1BR w/Pkng Cash 1,2&3BR Bnew Cash/Term 10%DP 2move In 0919-2189817

PASIG

1.5M 2BR Ortigas Condo Nr. C5 1stClass Amnts. Call Ricky 0918-3236095 / 656-1882

ORTIGAS 1BR T-520-0075

Thse Rayos Cpd Rosario P1M 3Units Arnold 627-6665

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MANILA

7 Doors + 1 unit 249.20m²
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Jane 075-5240069 • 0927-4003056

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LAS PINAS

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QUEZON CITY

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MRS. GASTON 931-2938/48
AYALA LAND BROKER

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Lipa City nr Malarayat minimum land area 5 ha. at P200/sqm ideal for small farming/resort for more info call sales 816-0597

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Residential Farm Lots nr QC overlooking MM good investment high ROI pre selling price 727-6871 • 0916-2212781

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

HOUSE

PASIG

2BR Hse 68 Pasig Blvd
Bgng Ilog New 0919-5058147

CONDO/TWNHSE

KALOOCAN

NEW 1BR•2BR COM'L
CLINIC•OFFICE•P6.5Tup
#162 P. Jacinto cor. #39 Biglang Awa
Caloocan 323-0175

PASAY

Cndo 1BR TB w/Phne 0919-6060950

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592
website: www.afp.milph / Email: cosb.j9@afp.mil.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid in a Single-Stage bid process for the **Supply and Delivery of Hydrographic Equipment** composed of **Hydrographic Survey Equipment and Data Processing Equipment** of the Philippine Navy with a budget ceiling of **Four Million One Hundred Twenty Eight Thousand Pesos (Php 4,128,000.00)**. Said budget shall be charged against the AFP Modernization Program funds. Specifics of this project are as follows:

LOT 1

ITEM	QTY	ABC
1. GPS, Hydro System (Real Time Kinematics)	1 set	Php 1,130,000.00
2. Echo Sounder	1 unit	578,000.00
3. Tide Gauge	1 unit	785,000.00
4. Total Station	1 unit	350,000.00
	Total	2,843,000.00

LOT 2

ITEM	QTY	ABC
1. Laptop Computers*	2 units	Php 200,000.00
2. Color Scanner*	1 unit	1,000,000.00
3. Desk Top Computer*	1 unit	85,000.00
	Total	1,285,000.00
	GrandTotal	4,128,000.00

*Branded

Only bids from entities who are authorized dealers/distributors of the original equipment manufacturers (OEM) for this type of hydrographic survey equipment and data processing equipment shall be entertained.

Bid documents shall be available for issuance starting **04 March 2004 until 05 April 2004** during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of a **One Thousand (Php1,000.00)** fee, which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund. Pre-registration documents may only be submitted starting on the day of first publication until the day before the pre-bid conference.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder authorizing its representative to purchase the bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of the bid documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **18 March 2004 at 09:00 a.m.** (local time) at the **Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Aguinaldo, Quezon City.** Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than seven (7) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

Deadline for submission of bid envelopes is on **06 April 2004 at 9:00 a.m.** (local time) and followed by the Opening of Bids at **10:00 a.m.** at the Silid Panday Pira.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for diqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder(s) in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **REYNALDO D RIVERA**
Major General, AFP
Chairman, AFP-BAC

(PDI - March 6 & 12, 2004)

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

MAKATI

2BR GRG nrB'dia 14T 8441669

MANILA

1BR nr P.GIL 5634007 5642878

PASAY

2BRM U/D P7500 T510-0915

PASIG

P8T screened quiet 2stry T-635-4244 Prefr3 w/o kids 4 Sn Clemente Kapitolyo 1Blk fm Shaw 1km fm EDSA

QUEZON CITY

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Pansol Hot Spring priv 7767507

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2% W/O TAKING CAR 3677523/24

FINANCIER 0919-3353989

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Honda Civic '96 715-5176

ISUZU

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CARS

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RUSH '92 Corolla XE A1 cond P140T neg DBO 09178354797

OTHER CAR BRANDS

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CARS FOR RENT

1T/Hiace 9136710/4333682

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HI ACE VAN RENT 7806589

MB 7415897•09208328657

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1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

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1.5% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

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2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

BUSN DRS OFW 524-3197

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PETS

Belg.Malinois 09175273339

DOG TRAINER 0919-3419012

Dog Trainer 0919-2050952

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

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Aowa Home&Ent Sys
Bnew P37T 0917-8214936

BUY/SELL

EDUCATION PLANS 780-0106

CONSTRUNCTION MATERIAL

1 Brand New GE Circuit Braker 1200 Amphers P40T Neg 0917-8236194

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Immigration Certificate of Residence No. 207600 issued by Commission on Immigration & Deportation, Manila on July 19, 1977 to ISIDRO D. DELA ROSA residing at #12 Abigail St., Kap. Pepe Subd., Cabanatuan (PDI-March 12, 2004)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Facial Clinic P250000 Incl rights & equipt. Contact 829-9765/0917-4035918 Look for Evelyn

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that assists in air management in polluted cities worldwide.
Send email enquiries to :
GlobalAirBiz@yahoo.com.sg

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RTW Wholesaler 3738821

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FREE CAREGIVER TRAINING PROGRAM W/CERTIFICATE 5212773 5614990 5899958

JOB HIRING 09167054572 AINA

Med Tech Reliever ASAP
RSV CLINIC 924-9935 TSQC

OFC MKTG AST 09203562010 IRA

OFC MKTG STAFF Start Aged w/pay 7498760/4217569 7838739/09183076888Adan

Office Mktg Staff 18-45 Coll grad/level 4389340 Andrea

WANTED
SECURITY OFFICERS

Must be college graduate, 25 to 45 years old
Licensed by the PNP-SAGSD

Please send application, resumé
w/ 2x2 recent photo to:
The VP for Administration
Security & Safety Corp. of the Philippines
75 F. Manalo Street, Cubao, Quezon City 1111
Tel. No. 705-1654/55

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Avenue, Davao City
Tel. No. 082-2219400 Tele Fax 082-2264885

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Davao City Water District (DCWD) hereby invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid in accordance with the IRR of RA 9184, for the supply and delivery of the following Pumps and Motors:

Item Package	Description	Ceiling of Bid Price
1	125Hp VTP & Motor PW-2	1,398,000.00
2	100Hp VTP & Motor PW-3	1,363,000.00
3	125Hp VTP & Motor PW-4	1,438,000.00
4	125Hp VTP & Motor PW-6	1,172,000.00
5	100Hp VTP & Motor PW-14	999,000.00
6	125Hp VTP & Motor PW-19	1,096,000.00
7	100Hp VTP & Motor PW-20	1,012,000.00
8	75Hp VTP & Motor PW-29	862,000.00
9	125Hp VTP & Motor PW-30	1,149,000.00
10	150Hp VTP & Motor Tugbok 05	1,331,000.00
11	250Hp VTP & Motor Calinan 02	2,000,000.00
	TOTAL	P 13,820,000.00

Eligibility requirements per item package are available at the Purchasing Division Office starting March 05, 2004 during its business hours. Deadline for the submission of eligibility documents/requirements will be on or before March 26, 2004.

Bid documents may be released only to applicants with a Notice of Eligibility, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P500.00 per package starting April 06, 2004.

Pre-bidding is set on May 03, 2004 at 3:00 pm and the Opening of Bids on May 14, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the DCWD Regional Training Center, Madapo Hills, Davao City.

DCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, or to waive any formality/informality of the bids and to accept only such bids which are advantageous to the District.

(Sgd.) ALFONSO E. LAID
AGM for Administration
Chairman, Bid & Canvass Committee

(PDI – March 5 & 12, 2004)

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

P.O. Box 2926
T.M. Kalaw Street
Ermita, Manila 1000
Philippines

Phone (632) 525-3196 / (632) 525-1748
Fax (632) 524-2329
E-mail. nanie@nlp.gov.ph

Office of the Director

INVITATION TO SUBMIT BID PROPOSAL

March 11, 2004

The **Philippine e-Library** project, through the **National Library of the Philippines (NLP)** as the **Project Management Office** is accepting bid proposals for the provision of various ICT services and products relative to the implementation of the Digitization component of the project.

The Philippine eLibrary shall cover the enhancement, conversion of important documents to digital format, development and installation of a computerized storage, indexing and retrieval system and the configuration design, acquisition and installation of the necessary hardware and software components to implement the digitization of the collections of the National Library of the Philippines (NLP), University of the Philippines System, Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Interested parties may obtain the Pre-qualification Requirements, Instruction to Bidders from the BAC Secretary, Ms. Teresita Vanguardia, Bibliographic Services Division, 4th Floor, The National Library, telephone no. 524-10-11 from **March 12 to 25, 2004.**

The National Library reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waived any informality or accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government. Further, NLP assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate any or indemnify the bidders for expense on losses that may be incurred in partial delay in this bidding.

(Sgd.) TEOFILA L. MANZANILLO
Chairman, BAC

(PDI–March 12, 13 & 14, 2004)

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P Laurel Avenue, Davao City
Tel. No. (082) 221-9400 • Tele Fax (082) 226-4885

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Davao City Water District (DCWD) hereby invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid in accordance with the IRR of RA 9184, for the supply and delivery of the following:

Item Package	Description	Ceiling Bid Price
1	One (1) unit Brand New Backhoe Loader	P 4,500,000.00

Eligibility requirements per item package are available at the Purchasing Division Office starting **March 12, 2004** during its business hours. Deadline for the submission of eligibility documents/requirements will be on or before April 05, 2004.

Bid documents may be released only to applicants with Notice of Eligibility, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 500.00 per package starting **April 16, 2004.**

Pre-bidding is set on **May 12, 2004** at 3:00 pm and the Opening of Bids on **May 21, 2004** at 9:00 am at the DCWD Board Room, J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City.

DCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids, or to waive any formality/informality of the bids and to accept only such bids which are advantageous to the District.

(Sgd.) ALFONSO E. LAID
AGM for Administration
Chairman, Bid & Canvass Committee

(PDI–March 12 & 19, 2004)

House and Lot for Sale

Scout Gandia, Quezon City

Lot Area: 162 sqm.

5 Bedrooms
(3 bedrooms – Ground floor)
(1 bedroom – 2nd floor)
(1 bedroom – 3rd floor)
1 Maids Room
3 Toilet & Bath
2 Car Garage

Easy access near Church,
Tomas Morato, Timog Ave.,
and Edsa

Amount: 6.5M

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested Design Consultancy firms to apply for eligibility and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title	: Engineering Consultancy Services for the Proposed PICC Sewage Treatment Plant
Scope of Work	: Design and Construction Supervision
Project Location	: PICC Compound, CCP Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget	: Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Pesos Only (P750,000.00)
Source of Funding	: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirements (Criteria)	
Consultancy Experience	: Firm must have provided in the last ten (10) years at least two (2) design consultancy services for the installation of a Sewage Treatment Plant or similar project such as WWTP one of which is with a capacity of not less than 1,000 cum/day. Said projects should be operational for at least 12 months and must have consistently delivered effluent that passes government standards. Principal/s should have at least ten (10) years experience as design consultant for STP facilities and must have a minimum of twenty (20) years experience as Registered Sanitary/Mechanical/ Chemical Engineer. Senior design/project staff engineer should be a Registered Sanitary or Mechanical Engineer and should have at least fifteen (15) years experience.
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set)
Date of Issuance	March 15 to 29, 2004
Deadline of Submission	March 31, 2004 / 4:30 p.m.
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility	
Date of Issuance	April 21, 2004
Bid / Tender Documents	
Cost of Documents	Three Hundred Pesos per set (P300.00)
Date of Issuance	April 22 to 23, 2004
Pre-bid Conference	
Date	April 28, 2004
Venue	BAC Secretariat Conference Room
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	May 18, 2004 / 10:00 a.m.

Issuance and submission of Eligibility & Bid Documents is at the BAC Secretariat at Rm. 204 5-Storey Building, BSP Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts., Manila, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn & 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Firm must be able to submit all the requirements/documents as required in the eligibility statements to be issued by BSP.

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

Schedule for issuance and notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 & its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – March 12 & 26, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
City Council
Manila

ORDINANCE NO. ______

AN ORDINANCE EXPROPRIATING THAT PARCEL OF LAND, SITUATED IN LUZON STREET, BARANGAY 260, ZONE 24, IN THE 2ND DISTRICT OF MANILA, REGISTERED IN THE NAME OF THE ONG-JUANCO REALTY CORPORATION, UNDER TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 184894, IN THE REGISTRY OF DEEDS OF MANILA, TO BE SOLD ON INSTALLMENT BASIS NOT EXCEEDING TWENTY (20) YEARS TO THE ACTUAL/BONA FIDE TENANTS OR OCCUPANTS THEREAT, UNDER THE LAND-FOR-THE-LANDLESS PROGRAM OF THE CITY OF MANILA.

Be it ordained by the City Council of Manila, THAT:

SECTION 1. The expropriation of that parcel of land, situated in Luzon Street, Barangay 260, Zone 24, in the 2nd District of Manila, registered in the name of Ong-Juanco Realty Corporation, under Transfer Certificate of Title No. 184894 in the Registry of Deeds of Manila is hereby authorized.

SEC. 2. The aforementioned parcel of land, when acquired shall be sold on installment basis for a period not exceeding twenty (20) years, under the Land-for-the-Landless Program of the City of Manila, to the intended beneficiaries of this Ordinance, namely:

1. Jose Aruta	41. Librado Santos, Jr.	81. Armando Malate
2. Ernesto A. Bago	42. Romeo del Mar	82. Bernardo Blanco
3. Alda Lunes	43. Larry Domingo	83. Junard Arcinas
4. Lourdes Oboza	44. Ronaldo del Mar	84. Danny Chua
5. Milagros Adan	45. Cesar Aruta	85. Romeo Roxas
6. Benny Peralta	46. Fernando Aruta	86. Roland Santos
7. Robert O. Cortez	47. Willyjado Aruta, Sr.	87. Ronaldo Ramos
8. Fernando Lu	48. Conrado Herosa	88. Didang Arcinas
9. Yolanda Lu	49. Dominador Herosa	89. Ken Magaspoc
10. Eduardo Lu	50. Salvacion Decorion	90. Cristina Alcomendas
11. Carmencita Convento	51. Rodolfo Alcomendas	91. Charlie Arcinas
12. Eliza Cortez	52. Reynaldo Decorion	92. Arnel Gadia
13. Danilo Convento	53. Herminio Alcomendas	93. Erlinda Cayabyab
14. Orlando Convento	54. Olivia Decorion	94. Louie Gadia
15. Bryan Bago	55. Adelino Blanco Enriquez	95. Rosalyn Roxas
16. Jericho M. Aruta	56. Gabriel Enrica	96. Manuel Fadera
17. Ferdinand Bago	57. Teodulo Belarmino	97. Rosie Heroza Cayabyab
18. Fidel Aruta, Jr.	58. Venancio Valenzona	98. Albert Gadia
19. Edwin Magno	59. Estrella Chavez	99. Antonio Alcomendas
20. Paquito Aruta	60. Luis Esperanza	100. Nalia Alvarez
21. Joy Aruta Palmes	61. Rogelio Valenzona	101. Luisito Baduria
22. Edgar Magno	62. Avelino E. Santiago	102. Rodrigo Marin
23. Pedro Magno	63. Emerlyn Ayao Roque	103. Beth Galaroza
24. James Peralta	64. Adelina Ayao	104. Aniceto Cayabyab
25. Bernie Garganera	65. Jesus Perol	105. Rommel Apolonio
26. Gina Camarinia	66. Margarito Ramos	106. Hernando R. Pabilona
27. Ernesto Lacno	67. Dominador Ebias	107. Rene Salvatierra
28. Roy Quesaba	68. Amante Manzano	108. Leonardo Decorion
29. Miguel Surell	69. Oscar Alcomendas	109. Renato Flores
30. Maria Jesusa Ganancial	70. Ireneo Alcomendas	110. Annabela Hipolan
31. Roger Lacno	71. Ryan Decorion	111. Leah Santianez
32. Romeo Lacno	72. Peregrina Santos	112. Jonathan Dumanhog
33. Liberty Arcinas	73. Amado Esperanza	113. Fortunata Salorre
34. Arnaldo Angtuaco	74. Justiniano Adrales	114. Danny Ramos
35. Adelardo L. Angtuaco	75. Eusebio Roman	115. Marlyn Alcomendas
36. Iderlina Tablang	76. Willyjado Aruta, Jr.	116. Rafael Mangarin
37. Roberto Cayabyab	77. Flora Malate	117. Ana Marie Aunaintad
38. Jesus de Jesus	78. Arturo Malate	118. Ryan Tumanang
39. Rommel Canlas	79. Erlinda Aruta	119. Filomena Peralta
40. Roberto del Mar	80. Imelda Aruta Sayno	

SEC. 3. The sum of THREE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (Php3,500,000.00), or so much thereof, as may be necessary shall be appropriated out of any unappropriated funds existing in the City Treasury to be made available to finance the filing of the expropriation proceedings. *PROVIDED, That* in order to support the funding requirements for the acquisition of the said parcels of land, the City Mayor is hereby authorized to negotiate with the pertinent National Government agencies concerned for funding assistance.

SEC. 4. The distribution, award and sale of the said property shall be in accordance with the established rules and regulations of the City Housing and Urban Development Board with the assistance of the Urban Settlements Office.

SEC. 5. *Effectivity Clause* – This Ordinance shall take effect upon its approval.

Enacted by the City Council of Manila at its regular session today.

Approved by His Honor, the Mayor, on

APPROVED:

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
Mayor
City of Manila

DANILO B. LACUNA
Vice-Mayor and Presiding Officer
City Council, Manila

ATTESTED:

EMMANUEL R. SISON
Secretary to the Mayor

RODOLFO F. LAPID
Secretary to the City Council

PRINCIPAL AUTHORS: HON. DANILO T. VARONA, HON. PACIFICO D. LAXA, HON. NELISSA F. BELTRAN-RICOHERMOSO, HON. RUBEN F. BUENAVENTURA, HON. EDWARD M. TAN, HON. MARLON M. LACSON, Majority Floor Leader and HON. DANILO B. LACUNA, Vice-Mayor and Presiding Officer.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the City Council ordered the publication of the above proposed Ordinance during its regular session held on January 29, 2004, pursuant to the provisions of Section 17, Article III of R.A. 409, as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Charter of the City of Manila.

(Sgd.) RODOLFO F. LAPID
City Government Dept. Head III
(Secretary to the City Council)

(PDI–March 12, 2004)

More Classifieds
on pages B6 & B7

GOLDJUNCTION CORPORATION
BUILDERS AND DEVELOPERS

TO: ALL STOCKHOLDER ON RECORD

RE: Notice of Stockholder's Annual Meeting.

The annual stockholder's meeting shall be held at the principal corporate address at 12 Robina St., Brgy. Bungad, San Francisco Del Monte, Quezon City, 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon on april 03, 2004 (Saturday).

AGENDA
1. QUORUM
2. Election to the Board of Directors.
3. Election of Corporate Executive Officers.
4. Other matters.
5. Adjournment.

In Quezon City, Metro Manila, this February 03, 2004.

(Sgd.) Ma. ROSARITO F. PIZARRO
O.I.C. Secretary
GOLDJUNCTION CORPORATION

Registered mail
with return card.

OFFICE SPACE FOR LEASE

20/F Security Bank Centre
6776 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

Unit 2001-B 208.97 sq.m.
Unit 2002-B 236.42 sq.m.

Call **Sammy Fabregas 891-1013**
or **Dottie Endraca 891-1027**

We entertain brokers.

DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on March 24, 2004, 2:00 p.m., Auditorium of the DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City for the following properties on CASH BASIS:

CODE	LOCATION		DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID
REAL ESTATE				
METRO MANILA				
TS-01	Amang Rodriguez Ave., Brgy. Manggahan, Pasig City		66,536 m² vacant lot (TCT No. PT-79453) (co-owned by PNB, LBP and DBP	P 399,216,000.00
BAGUIO				
AMD-ML-111	Bo. Lucban (now Bo. Amblong) Baguio City		18,517 m² two (2) adjoining interior parcels of vacant lots (TCT Nos. T-79824 and T-79823	P 37,034,000.00
BATAAN				
	Sta. Monica Homes, Sitio Wiswis, Camaya, Mariveles:		Residential lots with bldg. & imprvmts.	
AMD-PY-112	Lot – 45	Blk – 8	50 m² TCT No. T-229490	P 240,800.00
AMD-PY-113	22	20	50 m² TCT No. T-229498	123,700.00
AMD-PY-114	8	9	50 m² TCT No. T-229500	180,000.00
AMD-PY-115	49	8	50 m² TCT No. T-229493	133,700.00
AMD-PY-116	3	9	50 m² TCT No. T-229485	137,200.00
BATANGAS				
	Transville Homes Subd., Banay-Banay, Lipa City:		Residential lots with bldg. & imprvmts.	
AMD-MC-117	Lot – 17	Blk – 13	40 m² TCT-141653	P 151,300.00
AMD-PY-118	8	10	40 m² TCT-141652	P 153,300.00
AMD-PY-119	20	30	40 m² TCT-140591	P 170,700.00
AMD-PY-120	21	2	40 m² TCT-140574	P 158,700.00
AMD-ML-121	7	11	40 m² TCT-141648	P 156,000.00
AMD-ML-122	4	11	40 m² TCT-141655	P 153,700.00
AMD-ML-123	32	2	40 m² TCT-140584	P 158,700.00
AMD-ML-124	26	2	40 m² TCT-141647	P 156,000.00
AMD-ML-125	25	31	40 m² TCT-140568	P 181,300.00
AMD-ML-126	20	13	40 m² TCT-140595	P 156,000.00
AMD-ML-127	6	13	40 m² TCT-140589	P 156,000.00
AMD-ML-128	20	11	40 m² TCT-140577	P 156,000.00
AMD-ML-129	11	13	40 m² TCT-140598	P 151,300.00
AMD-ML-130	15	13	40 m² TCT-140581	P 153,700.00
AMD-ML-131	18	30	40 m² TCT-140596	P 206,000.00
AMD-ML-132	10	11	44 m² TCT-140599	P 159,000.00
AMD-ML-133	1	10	59.4 m² TCT-140569	P 202,200.00
AMD-ML-134	1	7	60 m² TCT-140588	P 234,700.00
AMD-ML-135	11	2	60 m² TCT-141654	P 348,000.00
AMD-ML-136	12	13	60 m² TCT-140594	P 201,300.00
AMD-PY-137	19	7	60.5 m² TCT-141651	P 255,800.00
AMD-PY-138	8	3	61.6 m² TCT-141650	P 250,800.00
AMD-ML-139	12	11	69.3 m² TCT-141646	P 226,900.00
AMD-ML-140	2	11	74.1 m² TCT-140576	P 241,200.00
BULACAN				
AMD-ML-141	Sto. Niño St., Poblacion, Bustos		2,593 m² industrial/residential lot (TCT T-170606) with bldg. & imprvmts.	P 5,839,000.00
CHATTELS (sale on "as-is, where-is" basis)				
CWB-17a	La Campana Compound, EDSA, Balintawak, Quezon City		1 unit Topkit Static Tower Crane, POTAIN	P 538,200.00
CWB-17b			1 unit Trailer mounted high pressure concrete pump, SCHWING	P 229,000.00
CWB-18	Bldg. No. 639, Gridley St., SRF Compound, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Subic, Zambales		Various machinery and equipment used for food processing	P 24,000.00 to P 11,311,600.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:
1. To inspect the properties to determine their actual condition before the bidding;
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at the AMD-Acquired Assets, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office during office hours; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers:
893-7172 or 818-9511 loc. 2218/2252 for Code starting with AMD & TS; and
926-1686 or 818-9511 loc. 1411 for CWB

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI–March 12 & 13, 2004)

UN
DP

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Contracting of Consulting Services for
PHI/03/009 – CDM National Authority and Operation

The Development Support Services Center (DSSC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites local consultants to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following subcontracts of the project "UNDP-DENR –EMB/IACC, PHI/03/009 – CDM National Authority and Operation".

The Project seeks to create / establish the Philippine National Authority (CDM) and establish the framework within which it shall operate. The project covers two specific areas, namely: (1) establishment of the CDM National Authority (NA); (2) development of the operational framework for the National Authority. Its over all long term objective is the country's achievement of sustainable development goals through sustained economic growth anchored on a healthy and vibrant environment and the reduction of GHG, globally, resulting in climate change mitigation.

The CDM is one of the mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol that country parties can adopt to comply with their emission reduction commitments. To be able to qualify and play an active role in the CDM market, the Philippines needs to put in place a competitive CDM operational framework to be in step with other developing countries with whom it will have to compete for CDM projects.

The achieve this, the project requires the services of a consultant(s) who can assist the Executing Agency, the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change (IACC) to do the following activities:

A. Subcontract 1 – Formulation of CDM Operational Framework

To assist the EA formulate the optimum and efficient functioning of the NA through the provision of a clear National CDM Operational Framework.

B. Subcontract 2 – Legal and Administrative Policy Requirements for NA

To assist the executing agency secure the needed legal instrument for the official designation of the appropriate government entity to serve as the National Authority for CDM in the Philippines.

Interested bidders may submit proposal for any one or all of the above-mentioned contracts.

For interested parties, Bid Documents (Eligibility Requirements, Instructions to Bidders and Terms of Reference) may be secured personally, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **PhP 500.00 for each Contract** from the following address :

Development Support Services Center
United Nations Development Programme
7th Floor, NEDA sa Makati Building
106 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, 1229 Makati City
Tel. No. (632) 892 0611 loc. 275
Fax No. (632) 816-4061 / 893-9598
Email Address : bc_admin.ph@undp.org

The abovementioned Bid Documents will be released to all interested participants starting **17 March 2004 to 24 March 2004 only**. The Bid Documents shall contain all instructions on the rules, procedures, dates and other schedules for the pre-bid conference and opening of bid envelopes, as well as further details on the scope of services required.

UNDP reserves the right to reject any or all the bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract to the most advantageous offer to the UNDP, for and in behalf of the Department of Energy. UNDP assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ETHELIND B. CAPUNO
Manager, DSSC

(PDI–March 12, 2004)

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig
(632) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 109/112
Sales@heritagepark.com.ph
Mortuary and Crematory opening soon!

OBITUARIES

RATE
P245 per column centimeter
(All prices exclusive of E-VAT)

DEADLINE
for reservations / cancellations / corrections
Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

"We fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."
2 Cor. 4:18

ROBERTO "BOBBY" BORJA Y PABLO

Peacefully returned to be with our Lord
on March 9, 2004.

His bereaved family, brothers and sisters: **Norma & Joe Cravotto, Alda & Bill Villacruels (†), Joaquin Jr. & Myrna, Ester & Edgar Diaz de Rivera (†), Alice & Jerry Welsh, Ben & Editha (†), Tony & Ruby, Pablo & Ester, Victor (†), Winston & Tina**; godson **Michael Galendez**, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, and his dear friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Cremation will be today, March 12, 2004 at 10:00 a.m. at La Funeraria Paz. Thereafter, his remains will be brough to Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills.

Interment will take place at the Manila South Cemetery on Sunday, March 14, 2004 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

In lieu of flowers, we would appreciate donations to Gawad Kalingan Foundation Inc.

"For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the LORD; and if we die, we die to the LORD. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the LORD"
Romans 14:7-8

JOSE C. MEDINA, JR.

Has entered our Father God's Haven of Rest on March 04, 2004.

His wife **Dr. Aida L. Medina**, son **Jomel**, daughter-in-law **Cristy** and grandsons **JemJem**, **Joey Boy** and **Eric** extend their heartfelt thanks to the

Fairview Fundamental Baptist Church
Department of Agrarian Reform
Land Bank of the Philippines
Congressman Carlos Padilla and Family
Endodontic Society of the Philippines
Cooperative Development Authority
Integrated Development Program of Nueva Ecija
West Fairview Homeowners Association
U.P. Vanguard
Philippine Army
Free and Accepted Mason Andres Bonifacio Lodge No. 199
East Avenue Medical Center Cooperative
To our dear friends and relatives

You who condoled, comforted and supported us, spiritually and financially and showered us with love and concern at the hour of our bereavement. Again, we say thank you.

CHUA SENG LIN

of Tuguegarao, Cagayan
Born: July 12, 1926
Died: March 10, 2004, 5:20 p.m.

His bereaved children **Linda, Bee-bee, Peter & Shirley, Biya & Jane, Ping Seng & Tess, Marilyn & Johnson, Ace** and **Alex**; grandchildren **Sheila, Sean** and **Tanya, Robbylyn, Patrick, Sharon, Stanley, Stephanie, Samantha, Cassandra, John Marvin**; great grandchildren **Seannelle, Creed** and **Jade** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at La Funeraria Paz, Inc., Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 16, 2004, 9:00 a.m. at the Chinese Cemetery.

CHONA STA. ROMANA-NARCISO

12 March 1953 - 25 February 1988

Her son **Victor**; sister and brothers **Neni** and **Elfren, Chito** and **Nancy, Nelin**; nieces and nephews **Tanya, Roel, Aina, Norman, Christopher,** and all those dear to Chona request for your continuing prayers for truth, justice and peace.

Chona will be fondly remembered at the 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. celebrations of the Holy Mass today at the Jesus the Divine Healer Parish, Tahanan Village, Parañaque.

Your support of the Ma. Corazon Lucero Sta. Romana Commemorative Scholarship managed by the St. Scholastica Research and Development Foundation Inc. will be most appreciated.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:-
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS
and bank-to-bank payments

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS FREE OBIT DESIGN

To lovingly remember
the birthdays into eternal life of

Mary Cabral Arroyo

September 14, 1918 – March 12, 2003

and

Atty. Eduardo Evangelista Arroyo

May 26, 1911 – February 21, 1992

Their children **Jun** and Cheding, **Mario** (†), **Marite** and Ken, **Peter** and Midori (†); grandchildren Sergie & Gina, Katha, Ava; Niño & Liana, Chris, Heather; Riki & Cindy; great grandchildren Allegria; Alicia, Kiana; invite relatives, friends and the prayerful reader to pray for their eternal happiness with the Lord.

Masses will be offered at:

St. James the Great Church *Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City*	6:30 p.m.
St. Joseph Convent (Pink Sisters) *Hemady, Quezon City*	6:00 a.m.
St. Jerome & Sta. Susanna Church *Alabang, Muntinlupa City*	6:00 a.m.
Sacred Heart Church *Kamuning, Quezon City*	7:00 a.m.
Santuario de San Antonio *Forbes Park, Makati City*	6:15 a.m.
St. John Bosco Church *Pasay Road, Makati City*	6:30 a.m.
St. Andrew the Apostle Parish *Bel-Air, Makati City*	6:30 a.m.
St. Paul Church *Elk Grove, California*	4:30 p.m.
St. Ignatius Church *Sacramento, California*	4:30 p.m.
St. Patrick's Cathedral *New York City*	4:00 p.m.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

MIGUEL D. LACUNA

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 6, 2004
at the age of 75 in New Jersey, USA.

His bereaved wife, **Cenona San Andres Lacuna,**

Children:
- **Philip & Julie Lacuna**
- **Cesar & Nora Lacuna**
- **Melinda & Dan Jose**
- **Marissa S. Lacuna**
- **Hernani S. Lacuna**
- **Melanie & Larry Millares**
- **Marina & Edwin Cruz**
- **Girlie & Joey Centeno**

Grandchildren:
- **Gladys & Abegail**
- **Wilbert, Trina, Paolo & Lemuel**
- **Albert, Jenny & Kim**
- **Christine**

- **Andrea**
- **Angela**
- **Brian, Michael, Jack & Julia**

request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel A-Arlington Memorial Chapel, C. Raymundo Ave., Pasig City.

Interment will be announced later.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16

In Loving Memory

on the

11th Death Anniversary

of

ATTY. JOSEFINA SORIANO BILAR

who passed away on March 12, 1993

Her husband **Felix**; children **Eric & Lynn, Nesty & Joyce, Marilu & Budjie Garcia**; grandchildren **Bea, Yammy, Matt, Eysbelle, Elinoir, Pocholo & Budjo**; in-laws and relatives request the readers to pray for her eternal repose.

Luz Trinidad Guzman

(of New Jersey,USA and Marikina City)
January 15, 1926 – March 7, 2004

A loving Nanay of **Sonny, Dave, Estela, Leny, Loy, Boyet, Lulu & Louie.**

Her body lies in state at the Santiago Funeral Homes, 13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Sunday, March 14, 2004, 2:30 pm at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after 1:00pm mass in Our Lady of the Abandoned Church.

Family and friends are requested to call 0919-4387604

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..."
Psalm 23:4

DEATH NOTICE

Romualdo "Sonny" Mendiola Y Salazar

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on March 7, 2004.

His remains lie in state at Capilla del Señor of Santuario de San Antonio, Mckinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

After the 9:00 am Mass on Saturday, March 13, 2004 interment will follow at the Garden of Memories, Bagong Kalsada, Pateros, Metro Manila.

Our Dearly Beloved

"Mama Rose"

Dr. ROSARIO CASTRO UNGCO, DMD

of New Jersey, USA, Makati City and Puerto Princesa City, Palawan

Peacefully joined our Lord at 9:30 a.m. on March 3, 2004
at the age of 78 at New Jersey, USA

She is survived by her husband **Juanito L. Ungco, Sr.**, children and children-in-law: **Sonny & Nini Ungco, Monet & Gail Ungco, Cecilia Scheuerman, Chuchi & Rebbie Ungco, Butch & Wilhelmina Ungco** and **Rosemarie & Weyland Zamboanga.**

Her grandchildren are as follows: **Anne, Billy, Joseph, MJ, Christopher, Nicollete, Walter, Alexis, David, Camille, Amanda, JP** and **Princess.**

Her surviving brothers are in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan: **Maximo Castro** and **Gen. Gregorio Castro** (Ret.).

Her remains will arrive in Manila from New Jersey, USA today, March 12, 2004. The celebration of the Holy Mass will be at 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon today, March 12, 2004 at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart Parish, Dao Street, San Antonio Village, Makati City.

On March 15, 2004, there will be a celebration of the Holy Mass at 12:00 noon at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

Interment will be on March 16, 2004, after the celebration of the Holy Mass at 12:00 noon at Puerto Princesa Memorial Park Chapel, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

The family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul. Please omit flowers. Thank you.

"Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, may she rest in Peace. Amen."

CLASSIFIEDS

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently with Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for pre-qualification and if later found qualified, to bid for the project described below.

Project Title	Proposed Rewaterproofing of the PICC Roofdecks and Canopies
Scope of Work	Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the completion of the proposed rewaterproofing of the PICC Roofdecks and Canopies in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	PICC Complex, Pasay City
Approved Budget	Twenty Five Million Eight Hundred Sixteen Thousand Three Hundred Fifteen Only (Php 25,816,315.00)
Source of Funding	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Minimum Requirements (Criteria)	
PCAB License	IAC category of at least medium "B" (Waterproofing Works)
Contractor's Construction Experience	Should have completed within the last five (5) years (1999 to present) at least two (2) projects involving waterproofing / rewaterproofing of offices and buildings one of which costs not less than Thirteen Million Pesos.
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	Should be able to submit notarized affidavits of Satisfactory Performance for the declared completed similar project.
Net Financial Contracting Capacity computed as 10 x (Current Asset less Current Liabilities) minus (Value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started)	at least Twenty Five Million Eight Hundred Thousand Pesos (P25,800,000.00)
Credit Line / Cash Deposit Certificate Req't.	Pesos Two Million Six Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 2,600,000.00)
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set)
Date	March 12 to 19, 2004
Deadline of Submission	March 22, 2004
Notice of Eligibility / Ineligibility	
Date	March 31, 2004
Bid / Tender Documents	Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of the non-refundable fee
Non-refundable fee	Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00)
Date	April 01 to 02, 2004
Pre-bid Conference	
Date and Time	April 12, 2004 / 10:00 a.m.
Venue	BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts.
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	April 27, 2004 / 10:00 a.m.

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor – Five Storey Building BSP Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sts., Manila, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn & 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Schedule for issuance of notice of eligibility / ineligibility up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 & its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) MARCOS J. SIONGCO, JR.
Chairman

(PDI – March 12 & 18, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
CITY COUNCIL
Manila

ORDINANCE NO. ______

AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MAYOR TO ACQUIRE, EITHER BY PURCHASE, NEGOTIATION OR EXPROPRIATION THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OF LAND WITH AN AREA OF EIGHT HUNDRED THIRTY SQUARE METERS AND EIGHTY SQUARE DECIMETERS (830.80 SQ.M.), MORE OR LESS, COVERED BY TRANSFER CERTIFICATE OF TITLE NO. 146692, FOR AWARD OR RESALE TO ACTUAL AND BONA FIDE TENANTS THEREAT, UNDER THE LAND-FOR-THE-LANDLESS PROGRAM OF THE CITY OF MANILA APPROPRIATING ONE MILLION ONE HUNDRED FORTY SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (PHP 1,146,500.00) NEEDED THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it ordained by the City Council of Manila, THAT:

SECTION 1. The City Mayor is hereby authorized to acquire, either by purchase, negotiation or expropriation that certain parcel of land with an area of Eight Hundred Thirty Square Meters and Eighty Square Decimeters (830.80 Sq. M.), more or less, covered by Transfer Certificate of Title No. 146692, and registered in the name of JOSE E. YAP, married to Beda Chua Pua, for award or resale to actual and bona fide residents, tenants, occupants, thereat, at the lowest possible price, under the Land-for-the-Landless Program of the City of Manila.

SEC. 2 The amount of ONE MILLION ONE HUNDRED FORTY SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (Php 1,146,500.00), or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any unappropriated funds existing in the City Treasury, to be made available for the purpose of acquiring the above-described property.

SEC. 3. The above undertaking shall be supervised by the City Housing and Urban Development Board, in coordination with the Urban Settlements Office with the directs and active participation of United We Stand Neighborhood Association, Inc., the Councilors representing the district and the barangay officials involved in planning and implementation.

SEC. 4. *Effectivity Clause* – This Ordinance shall take effect upon its approval.

Enacted by the City Council of Manila at its regular session today,

Approved by His Honor, the Mayor, on

APPROVED:

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
Mayor
City of Manila

DANILO B. LACUNA
Vice-Mayor and Presiding Officer
City Council, Manila

ATTESTED:

EMMANUEL R. SISON
Secretary to the Mayor

RODOLFO F. LAPID
Secretary to the City Council

PRINCIPAL AUTHORS: HON. DANILO T. VARONA, HON. RUBEN F. BUENAVENTURA, HON. PACIFICO D. LAXA, HON. NELISSA F. BELTRAN-RICOHERMOSO, HON. EDWARD M. TAN, and HON. MARLON M. LACSON, Majority Floor Leader.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the City Council ordered the publication of the above proposed Ordinance during its regular session held on March 2, 2004, pursuant to the provisions of Section 17, Article III of R.A. 409, as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Charter of the City of Manila.

RODOLFO F. LAPID
City Government Dept. Head III
(Secretary to the City Council)

(PDI – March 12, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO BID

The Supreme Court invites interested concessionaires to submit quotations/proposals for the operator of Canteen located at the Multi-Purpose Building, Supreme Court Compound, Padre Faura Street, Manila, that will provide canteen services to more or less 2,500 employees.

Interested concessionaires may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Property Division, Supreme Court, after the payment of a non-refundable fee of Eight Hundred Pesos (P800.00). For additional information contact the Secretary, Atty. Ennar Cabanilla at Telefax 4042731 or Norma C. Josue at Telefax 5247425.

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference shall be on **March 26, 2004** at 2:00 p.m. 3rd Floor Session Hall, Old Building, Supreme Court.

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The legal requirements for eligibility of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative on **March 31, 2004** at 2:00 p.m. 3rd Floor, Session Hall, Old Building, Supreme Court.

III. OPENING OF BIDS

Only bids of eligible bidders will be accepted and opened in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives on **April 14, 2004** at 10:00 a.m., 3rd Floor, Session Hall, Old Building Supreme Court.

Interested bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the committee on Bids or COB Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defects or informalities therein, or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman
Committee on Bids

(PDI--March 12 & 19, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Capiz
MUNICIPALITY OF DUMALAG

-BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE-

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The MUNICIPALITY OF DUMALAG, CAPIZ invites interested bidders to pre-qualify and to cast sealed bids for the delivery of various construction materials for the construction of San Agustin-San Martin Farm to Market Road details of which is posted at the Bulletin Board in the municipality reserved for the purpose with approved budget of Php 2,217,087.50.

Interested parties may secure bid documents and Eligibility Requirements from the BAC SECRETARIAT, Office of the Municipality Planning and Development Coordinator, Dumalag, Capiz upon payment of non-refundable fee of Php 1,000.00.

The particulars of the bidding are as follows: viz:

Issuance of Bid Documents	March 16-17, 2004
Pre-Bid Conference	March 18, 2004
Opening/Submission of Bids	10:00 A.M. April 02, 2004

Bidders shall submit on the date of Opening/Submission of Bids two (2) sealed envelopes containing (1) Checklist of Eligibility Requirements, Bid security; its forms, amount and validity period, certification of the supplier/s that he/they has/have not been blacklisted, etc. and (2) Financial Proposal.

The BAC concerned reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason whatsoever, to waive any defects therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most responsive.

(Sgd.) **ROBERTO F. FRESAS**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--March 5 & 12, 2004)

4th Kapihang Entrepinoy

IS ENTREPRENEURSHIP a priority program? Do you know the impact of globalization to micro enterprises?

Candidates running for national posts have been invited to present their platform or program on entrepreneurship at the 4th Kapihang Entrepinoy on March 26, Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Senden Hall of the Asian Social Institute in Malate.

The country's political scenario and its effects to the small business sector will be tackled by Atty. Adrian Sison, a political analyst, columnist and a business radio broadcaster while Professor Winnie Monsod, a distinguished economist was also invited to discuss the impact of globalization to micro enterprises. Ms. Rhodora Leaño, head of the Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprises Development of the Department of Trade and Industry will give participants an update and a situationer of entrepreneurship in the Philippines. Moderators to the 4th Kapihang EntrePinoy are Ms. Malou Mangahas of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism and Mr. Angelo Palmones of DZMM-ABS CBN radio station.

Interested to attend the 4th Kapihang EntrePinoy, please call and register at the entrepreneurship service hotlines at 523-9776 or 524-1879, mobile 0916-303-7446 email address: cse@pacific.net. Registration fee is at P300.00 only. A Certificate of Participation will be given to those who will attend the entire business forum. Snacks will be served. Kapihang Entrepinoy is a quarterly business forum organized by the Center for Small Entrepreneurs.

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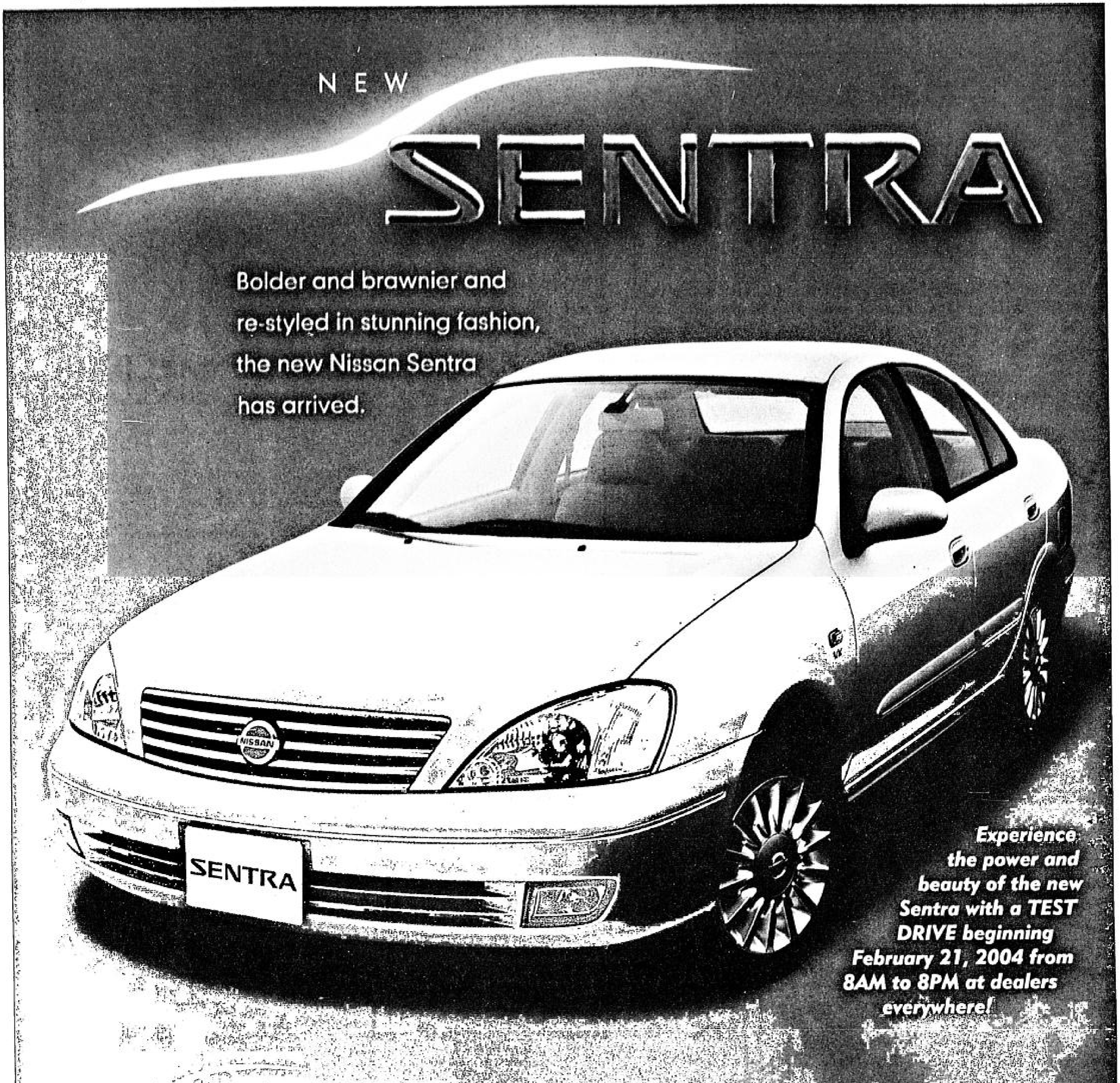

NEW

SENTRA

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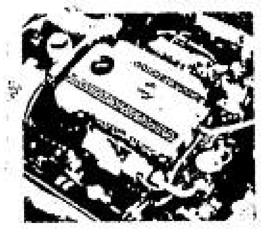
Experience the power and beauty of the new Sentra with a TEST DRIVE beginning February 21, 2004 from 8AM to 8PM at dealers everywhere!

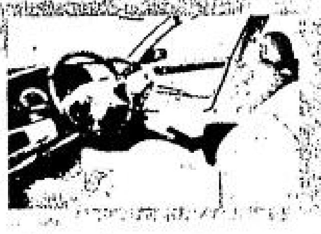
STRONGER



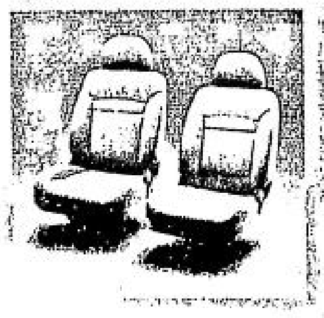
Power Trip
New 1.8L POWER with VTC (Valve Timing Control) for optimum strength. Also available in 1.6L and 1.3L models.

And Safer, Too
Awarded 5-Star Rating for Safety by the Japanese New Car Assessment Programme.

SMARTER

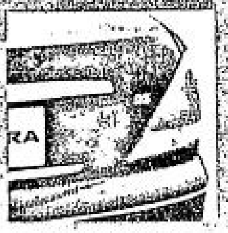


Comfort Zone
Elegant interior is luxurious and functional, and yet youthful in spirit and ambience.

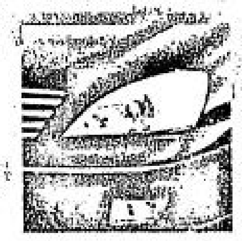


The Right Stuff
New cabin materials, cooler fabric and leather upholstery give the new Sentra even more ownership value.

SEXIER



Body Beautiful
Refined exterior features smoother lines, new grill, rear fender and bumper.



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Available in 1.8L GT (A/T) | 1.6L GS (A/T) | 1.6L GSX (A/T M/T) | 1.3L GX (A/T M/T)

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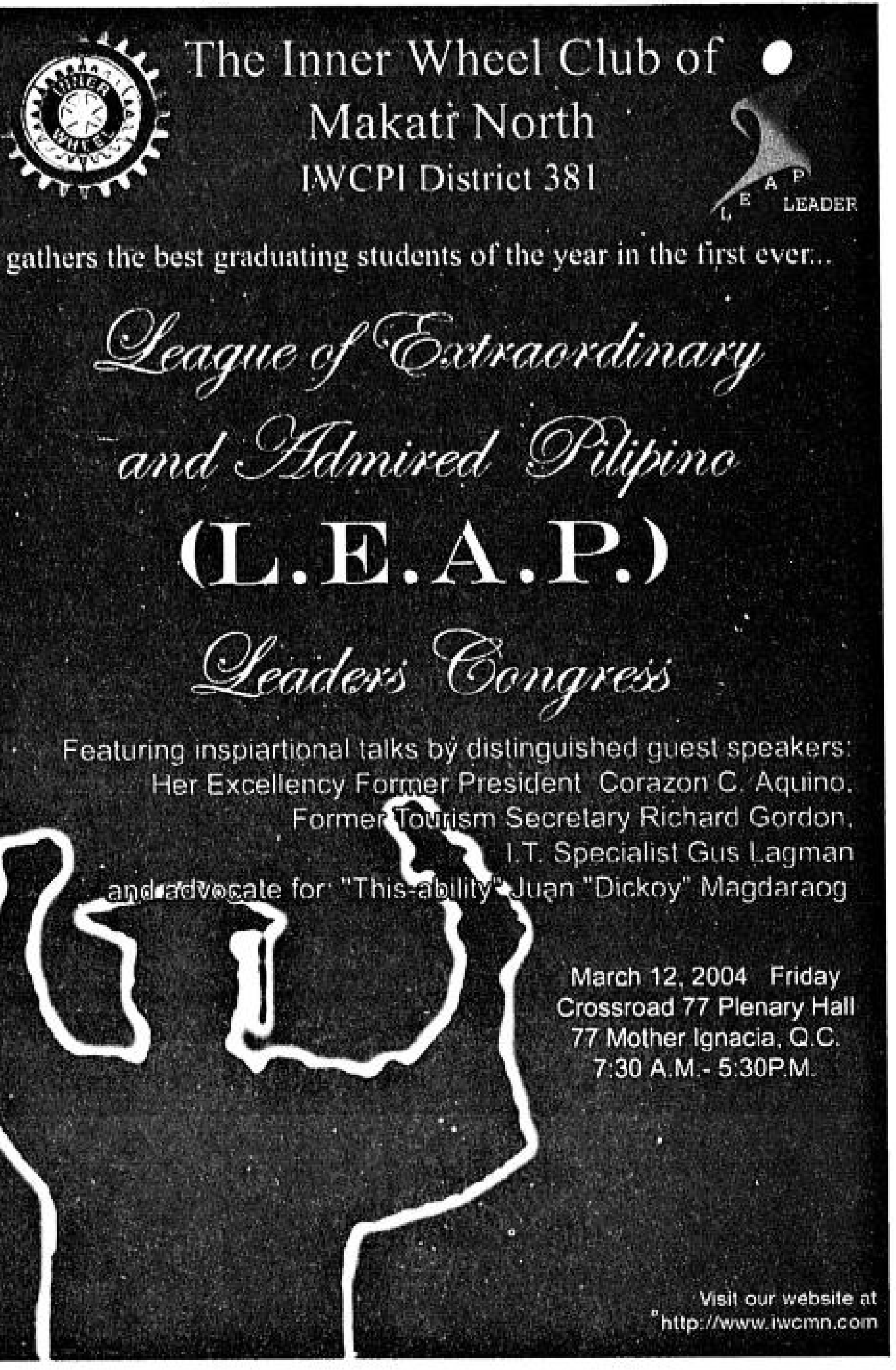

The Inner Wheel Club of
Makati North
IWCPI District 381

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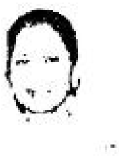

Greetings!

In behalf of the IWCPI Board, I extend my best wishes to the organizers and participants of the 1st L.E.A.P. Leaders Congress. This noble undertaking could not have materialized without the effort of IWC Makati North led by President Ma. Christina Herrera. I hope that other clubs all over the country will also espouse such pursuit for it is high time that we inspire the youth in making a significant difference in our country.

Sadly, a large percentage of youth is plagued by apathy on current political, social, and economic problems besetting our country today. Many of them are content in receiving their daily baon and limit their activities in the four corners of the classroom without minding the troubles plaguing the real world. I hope that through this Congress, such indifference, at least will be abated, and be replaced by awareness and vigilance that would surely eliminate the prospect of facing the same problems and social ills when you lead the country in the future. Much is at stake in our society today, especially now that we are about to hold our national elections, and I hope the Filipino leaders of tomorrow will not fail our country and fellowmen.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

AIDA VERA CRUZ
IWCPI NATIONAL PRESIDENT
IWC Year 2003-2004

On behalf of IWCPI District 381, greetings to all the participants and guests of IWC-Makati North's 1st League of Extraordinary & Admired Pilipino (L.E.A.P.) Leaders Congress.

Personally, I take great pride and honor that such a worthy project is being undertaken by IWC-Makati North not only because it belongs to District 381 where I am District Chairman but doubly so because it is organized by the Club I chartered five years ago!

My esteemed admiration and congratulations to the working team of the IWC-MN 1st L.E.A.P. Leaders Congress headed by Pres. Tina Herrera. I know this team has spent many hours, days and weeks of hard work to assure the success of this project.

Mabuhay and more power to IWC Makati North!

May God be with you always.

VICTORINA "Vicky" MAGADIA
DISTRICT CHAIRMAN
IWC Year 2003-2004

With great pride and honor do I trumpet to the Filipino people that there is a group of very concerned women in this country that have committed themselves to take specific and concrete steps that may bring us a better Philippines.

We, the Inner Wheel Club of Makati North have chosen the path of engaging in the leadership training and development of Outstanding and Admired Young Pilipino Leaders for the next generations to come. It is my hope and prayer that from this batch and from the succeeding youth congresses that will be organized, a new breed of Filipinos will emerge and lead this country to a better tomorrow.

For if this 1st L.E.A.P. Leaders Congress produces even one individual Filipino that eventually develops and becomes a true leader for our country, then all the efforts and difficulties that we have gone through in organizing it would have been more than adequately rewarded.

I would like to express my personal gratitude to each and every member of the Inner Wheel Club of Makati North who has been a part of this tremendous undertaking. In my heart, each one of us are all equal because of our interest and stake in this effort of searching for the new leaders of the next Generations of Filipinos.

MA. CHRISTINA S.J. HERRERA
PRESIDENT, Inner Wheel Club of Makati North
IWC Year 2003-2004

League of Extraordinary & Admired Pilipino (L.E.A.P) Leaders Congress

This congress was born and conceptualized over coffee when its President Ma. Christina "Tina" Herrera and Vice President Corazon "Cora" Tan were brainstorming at Starbucks Katipunan sometime in October 2003 for other club projects. They felt that the future of our country lies in the development of young, still unjaded and uncorrupted leaders whose orientation and values, if correct and properly directed, will propel us to a better quality of life. The idea generated excitement and enthusiasm that it was immediately proposed and approved by the club. This Congress is envisioned to be the first of many similar congresses with the following objectives:

1. Rally the youth to creatively think of ways to make a difference in our country they join the workforce,
2. Emphasize the importance of possessing core values that will serve as their rudders in their journey as productive adults, and
3. Encourage the youth not to give up on our country in spite of difficulties they may observe or even experience.

The Working Committees

Overall Project Chairman:	President Ma. Christina S.J. Herrera
Programme:	Marie Zelie Tan
Admin Committee:	Cynthia Magdaraog & Daisy dela Torre
Logistics Physical Arrangements:	Myles Aries & Baby Laurit
Ways & Means:	Maribel Calma, Tina Herrera & Sylvia Lina
Food:	Girlie Zaldarriaga, Thelma Ampil & Marje Syjuco
Design of Collaterals & MTV:	RR Herrera
PR & Publicity:	Tina Tabongbanua c/o Tina Herrera
Mail-outs & Follow-up:	Air Freight 21 & DOS I c/o Sylvia Lina
Souvenir Program:	Daisy dela Torre
Website Design:	AmphilTech c/o Larry & Rose Bortles
Marshalls:	Cora Tan, Thelma Ampil & Tes Lagman
Lead Facilitator:	Marie Zelie Tan

Title Sponsors:
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QC Rotarians hold district confab in Baguio

AT LEAST 1,200 Rotarians, spouses and guests from Rotary International District 3780 (Quezon City) gathered recently at the CAP-John Hay Trade and Cultural Center in Camp John Hay, Baguio for their annual District Conference. The conference ran March 5 and 6.

Leading the conference was two-term district governor Roberto F. Viray and spouse Echel. Rotary International president Jonathan B. Majiyagbe's personal representatives to the conference were PDG Rodolfo S. Estrellado (D-3810) and spouse Linda. The chair of the District Conference was PAG Danilo G. Espinosa of the Rotary Club of Biak-na-Bato.

The two-day conference aimed to advance the Object of Rotary through Rotary International's theme "Lend a Hand" (RY 2003-2004). Distinguished and knowledgeable speakers from the world of Rotary, academe and government sectors furthered the aims of Rotary during the conference.

Among the conference speakers were Baguio City Mayor Bernardo M. Vergara, Estrellado, Health Secretary Manuel M. Dayrit, University of Baguio president Dr. Virgilio C. Bautista, PRID Sabino S. Santos (D-3790), RIDE and Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn I. Bolante (D-3830), DRR Eric Anthony P. Taguionod, and Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr.

Some of the highlights of the conference included musical numbers by the Philippine Military Academy Band, dance and musical numbers by the University of Baguio Dance Company and the University of Baguio Choral Group, Rotary Club exhibits, the district leadership seminar, a pre-conference golf tournament, House of Friendship, Rotarian Spouses' special activities, an international costumes parade, motorcade and fellowship night, recognition of outstanding club accomplishments, Family of Rotary Camp-Out, presentation of inbound (D-7560, Indiana) and outbound Group Study Exchange teams, proclamation of district governor nominee Benjamin T. Bacarro, and the induction of DGE George Howard and his immediate family at the Governor's Ball.

Lead host club for the district conference was the Rotary Club of Biak-na-Bato led by president Segundino Labro and spouse Cora. Ten Rotary clubs co-hosted the biggest district event of the year, namely Valencia, Quezon City, Diliman, Diliman North, Kagitingan Cubao, Kamuning, Loyola Heights, Quezon City Circle, Sikatuna, and Tomas Morato.

Catch the PLDT Cybertribe search finals

PLDT Vibe Cybertribe, the coolest online search for the hippest *barkadas*, will have a happenin' playoff this Saturday, March 13, at the SM Megamall Atrium, Building A. The top 10 Cybertribes who qualified for the Finals will outwit and outplay each other as they vie for the Cybertribe title and win P50,000 cash, a Boracay trip and a chance to be seen on MTV. These cool Cybertribes will engage one another in several exciting challenges that will really make them show off their skills and prove their mettle against other Cybertribes.

At the event, PLDT Vibe will have booths where spectators and even participants can register online to Vibe's newest web service, Vibester, the coolest online community and link to friends! Right after the Finals, PLDT Vibe will be holding a concert featuring popular band sensations, MYMP and Entwine! Since this will be a star-studded affair, you can also get the chance to see your favorite MTV VJs Patty Laurel and Cindy Kurleto as they host the grandest Cybertribe playoff of the year! So gear up for the coolest and most exhilarating Saturday of your life and catch the PLDT Vibe Cybertribe search finals. It will really leave you breathless and asking for more.

Philamlife hosts 'enchanted evening'

PHILAMLIFE, the largest and most diversified insurance company in the Philippines, will hold its 2004 National Recognition Program titled "One Enchanted Evening" on March 17 and 18 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City.

Philamlife president and CEO Jose L. Cuisia Jr will lead the company's key executives in honoring close to 300 agency leaders and career agents who satisfied the production requirements of the fiscal year 2003 Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT), Premier Agents Club, International Quality Award and other special honor clubs. The company will also confer its first ever Hall of Fame award to one of its top agency leaders.

In line with the company's 2004 sales theme "Quantum Leap", Philamlife will be holding a forum on service excellence featuring internationally acclaimed innovator and motivator Ron Kaufman during the convention on March 17.

Other highlights of the two-day affair include an all-night sing and dance party with the retro '60s music of the Rockin' Revival band and a fairy tale-inspired gala awards with some of the country's most distinguished performers like Ariel Rivera, Agot Isidro, Bituin Escalante, Carlo Orosa, and Patricia Bermudez.

Philamlife, the recognized leader in the life insurance industry, has consistently honored its committed and dedicated agents whose exemplary sales performance has supported the company's continued growth and market leadership in the life insurance industry.

Philamlife is an affiliate of the American International Group (AIG), the leading US-based international insurance and financial services organization.

CCFI'S 54TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

VERA

MIRANI

CHAIR Bob C. Mirani and Justice Rizalina S. Bonifacio Vera, president of the Community Church Foundation Inc (CCFI), lead 15 officers and directors, executive staff and over 300 delegates—corporate and individual members from among 56 service organizations nationwide—at the CCFI Annual Membership Meeting set at 8 a.m. today at the CCFI headquarters on Remedios Street, Malate, Manila. Mirani, this year's guest speaker, will talk about 'Self Reliance and Service Excellence—CCFI's Continuing Quest'. Vera introduces the guest speaker while Rosario Villar, 3rd vice president, delivers the welcome remarks. Lourdes Lt. Pimentel and Orlando P. Pena will emcee. Other program participants are Nellie L. Mercado, Pishu B. Dialani, Lourdes B. Ferrer, Dr. Angelito G. Manalili, lawyer Pablo LR. Ronquillo, Dr. Cindy Dollente Ang, engineer Romulo M. del Rosario, and Nora C. Bacabaac.

GAD PHOTO EXHIBIT

NCRFW commissioner Isabelita Palance (2nd from left) and Ma. Elena Y. Lorenzo (center) cut the ceremonial ribbon of GAD photo exhibit during the opening program of the Department of Agriculture celebration of National Women's Month. Witnessing the event are (from left) DA-GAD focal system co-chair Jindra Linda L. Demeterio, NNC director Elsa M. Bayani and AFIS director Inez G. Magbual.

Bits & Clips

All set for GSB Night

STUDENTS, alumni, faculty and friends of the De La Salle University Professional Schools Inc Graduate School Business (DLSU PSI-GSB) are invited to join the fun of GSB Night 2004 on March 12, 6 p.m. at the AFP Officers' Club, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. With this year's theme "An1mo: The Green Within," GSB Night 2004 aims to strengthen ties across the LaSallian network and to provide opportunities for interaction and business. The annual event will be a grand fusion of the three DLSU PSI-GSB campuses-Taft, Ortigas and RCBC Plaza-can gather, network, have fun and raise funds. Highlighting the event is the launch of the MBA major in Culture and Arts Management. The La Salle Greenhills Adult Night School will be this year's project beneficiary. For tickets and inquiries, call 536-0267.

CSC play

BUDDING thespians of Miriam College Child Study Center (CSC) are performing "Ang Hiling ni Prinsesa Huni" at the school's Marian Auditorium from March 9 to 12. The annual CSC play started in 1981 with an adaptation of "Snow White". Then in 1987, it showed its first original script "Edong sa Aklatlandiya". In developing their plays, the CSC faculty highlights values upheld by Miriam College-peace, truth, justice, stewardship of creation, and gender equality. This year, Gen Goño, Ging Esteves, Mona Castro, and Patty Pabiz direct the four groups of little actors and actresses.

Fun run for Mindanao

ON MARCH 21, Sunday, 5:30 a.m. at the NBC Tent Parking Lot, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) will be launching the fund campaign Education Through My Charitable Contribution, or E=MC2, through a fun run. This campaign aims to raise awareness and funds for education programs that will benefit hundreds of school children in depressed areas of Mindanao. The deadline for registration is on March 12.

Marriage encounter

ALL FOR Jesus (AJ) held a fund raising classical at Merk's recently in preparation for the Marriage Encounter weekend from March 12 to 14. Married couples interested in renewing their commitment and rediscovering more about each other are invited to join the Marriage Encounter weekend seminar from March 12, 4 p.m. to March 14, 8 p.m. at the Angels Hills Formation Center in Tagaytay City. Call Richard-Roni Merk at 0917-8191135, Otis-Jing Salon at 0919-5858361, Nilo-Angie Tamoria at 0917-6266094 or 0917-6266204, or Teddy-Flory Linsangan at 0917-5561348 or 0917-2480029.

Franchise options

RELIABLE and affordable franchise options are making their way to provinces near you this March, April and May. "Negosyo at Edukasyon Para sa mga EntrePinoy" (Nationwide Franchise & Education Show for Entrepreneurs) offers some of the best franchise opportunities well suited for those who want to call the shots and build their business via franchising. The professional trade show kicks off March 12 to 14 in Baguio City, then from March 26 to 28 in Dagupan, April 16 to 18 in Cabanatuan, April 30 to May 2 in Bulacan, May 14 to 16 in Pampanga, and from May 28 to 30 in Cagayan de Oro. This is a project of Sure Express Worldwide Corp (Surex) in cooperation with event organizer Convex International and media partner Entrepreneur Magazine. For inquiries, call Surex at 867-8055 or 56, or Convex International at 726-4128 or 29.

Enjoy Incubus with Jag

HERE'S your last chance to enjoy Incubus to the max with the Enjoy Incubus with Jag Jeans adventure. Jag Jeans presents "Incubus Live in Manila" today, March 12 at the CCP Open Grounds. Enjoy Incubus with Jag Jeans simply by shopping at any of your favorite Jag Jeans boutiques. For every single receipt purchase worth at least P1,000 of any Jag Jeans regular-priced item, you will get a chance to grab goodies instantly, from a free ticket to the Incubus concert, a Jag "Murder" bag or PLDT Vibe Card. This offer is good until March 12.

AMA IT Olympiad

MORE than 500 schools from different regions are now preparing their best team in a nationwide technology quiz competition. Now on its 3rd successful year, the AMA IT Olympiad is the leading inter-school quiz event with cash prizes amounting to millions of pesos to be given to national winners. The national event is scheduled on March 12 at Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City. As the AMA IT Olympiad National Champion, each team member will receive P25,000 cash and a full scholarship grant at the AMA Computer University. Their coach will receive P30,000 while the school will be the beneficiary of P100,000 and a trophy. The AMA IT Olympiad is organized by AMA Computer University and AMA Foundation Inc in cooperation with the DOST.

BUSINESS

Exporters in a bind over DOF controversy

By Michelle V. Remo

EXPORTING firms have expressed serious concern over the controversy hounding the Department of Finance's One-Stop Shop (OSS), saying the current flap in the government agency threatens the operations of their businesses.

The firms, which are regular claimants of tax credits, are particularly concerned about the possible suspension or termination of OSS Executive Director Ernesto Hiansen.

They said that Hiansen's exit may lead to a takeover of someone heavily involved in fraudulent tax credit syndicates.

Hiansen, along with nine other officials of the DOF and the Bureau of Internal Revenue, were accused of defrauding the government of over P21 million in taxes.

The National Bureau of Investigation filed the charges before the Office of the Ombudsman.

The exporting firms said that the charges filed against Hiansen was part of a plot to ease him out of the OSS so that the ongoing investigations of big-time tax credit syndicates, which his department initiated, would be stopped.

"We believe in the integrity of the center (OSS)," said one official from a marine-exporting company during a meeting held yesterday at the OSS conference center. "We fear that if he (Hiansen) is taken out of the picture, someone who has connections with unscrupulous firms might be assigned in his place."

The exporters said the issuance of fraudulent tax credit certificates would affect the operations of legitimate claimants of tax credits.

Tax credits are given to exporting firms as incentives for their dollar contribution to the country. Qualified firms use the tax credits to get discounts on importation of raw materials, which are used in the production of their export products.

The OSS is the agency that issues tax credit certificates (TCCs). It also investigates dubious tax credit claims. The OSS submits cases of fraud to Task Force 156, which Malacañang created to go after tax credit syndicates.

Aside from the fear of Hiansen's exit, the exporters also said the controversy hounding the OSS might result in delays in the processing of tax credit applications by legitimate claimants.

Exporters said delays in the processing of applications for tax credits would hamper operations of their importation.

They also sought to validate the TCCs that have already been issued to them. With the investigations on Hiansen and members of his staff, the exporters said, the authenticity of their TCCs might be questioned.

At the moment, Hiansen is at a loss.

"It is causing me much pain and anguish to learn from the media that I am now facing criminal charges in the newly discovered P21-million tax credit scam case," Hiansen said in a statement. "I am not aware of the nature of these charges as I have not received any formal notice to reply, much less a copy of the complaint."

Laying the final coat.

Ayala's latest work is nearly finished. By October of this year, you can move into your new home at Bonifacio Ridge. It is the first residential condominium managed by Ayala Land Inc. to rise in the new Bonifacio Global City. In just a few months, the rich colors of the city can be your backdrop to picturesque mornings. Or nights. Come and take a peek as we put the finishing touches on our masterpiece. For our new financing schemes, contact us at 848-5000. email: ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph website: www.ayalaland.com.ph

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BONIFACIO RIDGE

Developed by FORT BONIFACIO DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Managed & marketed by AYALA LAND XV

Why move to Bonifacio Ridge?

✓ *No need to wait.* By October of this year, Bonifacio Ridge will be completely ready. So you can move into your new home in just a few short months.

✓ *Now on the rise in the new Bonifacio Global City.* This is the first residential condominium managed and marketed by Ayala Land, Inc. that is strategically situated in the most modern and fully master-planned business district in the country. With the Ayala Campos group now behind Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation, the Global City is an emerging reinvention of the conventional metropolis.

✓ *Right at the heart of modern living.* Lush hectares of the adjacent Manila Golf Course await homeowners, along with magnificent views of the Makati Central Business District skyline. Close to schools, shopping and entertainment centers, restaurants, public services, office spaces and soon a world-class hospital facility, the Bonifacio Ridge is just 5 minutes away from Makati via the Kalayaan Flyover.

✓ *Two towers that echo beauty and indulgence.* Standing on 7,600 square meters of prime land in the northwestern portion of the Bonifacio Global City, Bonifacio Ridge is a beautifully crafted two-tower (Cypress Point and Spanish Bay Towers) residential condominium with a shared podium surrounded by exquisitely sculpted landscape and all the things that spell out a good life.

✓ *An abundance of open space.* The Bonifacio Ridge is a low-density community. Its location at the northwestern portion of the Bonifacio Global City makes it less crowded than other areas. Here, there will always be plenty of room to play, rest and breathe.

✓ *Going beyond your needs.* Escape from the frantic pace of city life the moment you enter the lobby. Hushed foyers are nestled within a series of arbors and greens. Complete top-of-the-line amenities are also found at the podium level that extends up to 4,000 square meters. Take a private dip in the pool, do a quick run at the jogging area, or mingle with neighbors at the multi-purpose hall. Children also have their own kiddie pool and play area.

✓ *All in the details.* Enjoy living spaces that truly enhance the way you live. Each tower has 18 floors and only 144 units, all measuring approximately 113 square meters. Residences afford generous space and are designed for entertaining while enjoying the panoramic views. A few of its many special features are beech wood veneer floor planks (less prone to wear and tear), air-conditioning units for all bedrooms and den, finished bathrooms with imported fixtures, built-in modular closets with mirror doors for bedrooms, fully fitted maple kitchen cabinets with accessories, and plug-and-play cable and internet connections.

✓ *Luxury and high style within your means.* Units are made more affordable through flexible payment options. Metrobank, Equitable-PCI, or Banco de Oro can finance up to 80% of total purchase price, enabling buyers to avail of cash discounts with only 20% equity.

✓ *Unmatched standards.* Backed by the quality and maintenance of an Ayala-managed property, Bonifacio Ridge is the perfect setting for the kind of lifestyle so many individuals crave for.

Driven by comfort, beauty, luxury and simplicity, the Bonifacio Ridge is the ideal community for young executives, baby-boomers, empty nesters and retirees, as well as investors seeking to make a secure financial decision. Designed for homeowners of all ages, it has successfully created an upscale, vibrant community that meets the needs of all its residents. Unique in value, view, price and location, Bonifacio Ridge is truly something you can count on because it was made for you.

Interested? Call us at 848-5000. You may also email *ayala-sales@ayalaland.com.ph* or log on to *www.ayalaland.com.ph*. Model units are available for viewing on-site at 1st Street, Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, Metro Manila.

BUSINESS Friday

Marketing Biz

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

'Grassroots promo' brings in C, D, E crowd

By Juan Escandor Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

NAGA CITY—In 1994, Maria Carolina V. Villegas, now 39, decided to quit from a company that sells herbal products. She was confident she could succeed on her own, selling similar products with a different promotional strategy.

The idea of "grassroots promotion" was always in her mind. She envisioned a promotional strategy that directly engages her target clients—the C, D and E income groups.

Villegas' seven-year experience in selling herbal products was her source of confidence to start her own herbal products business.

The network she established with the importers of raw materials for herbal products was an important factor to start her own business. Not long after she quit her job, an importer offered her distributorship of the "My Marvel Taheebo Tea."

She put up a family company, invited her brothers and sisters to get involve, and registered it as Herbs & Nature Corp.

BFAD registration

Villegas immediately applied for product registration at the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD).

The registration of "taheebo tea" with the BFAD established the legitimacy of her products. She aggressively penetrated the local market with her "grassroots promotion" strategy.

Villegas reached out to the C, D and E clients by hopping from one barangay to another to introduce her products. She distributed easy-to-read literature and conducted short lectures.

She adds that she also gave away one-month supply of samples worth P250 to each target client in the villages they visited.

Villegas' "grassroots promotion" yielded results. Many of her target clients who used the samples came to her office to buy the "taheebo tea."

"Taheebo tea" is prepared like an ordinary tea and may be drunk many times in a day without overdose. It serves as an alternative to caffeine and tastes pleasant with a distinct aroma.

Radio airtime

Later, she decided to buy radio airtime and launched the "taheebo tea" radio program to reach out to the old-time radio listeners and potential clients in far-flung villages.

The radio program featured candid testimonies of clients who had used her products and claimed benefits from them.

When the "taheebo tea" importer offered to her the importation of the basic raw material from Brazil, she was more than glad to accept it. But being the importer, she has to assume all the responsibilities of producing the finished products from the raw material.

Even with limited capital, her additional business responsibilities were not a big

GRASSROOTS/ B2-2

WINS CONVERTS ABROAD

'Patingi-tingi' reaps loads

By Ramon Isberto
*Public affairs head,
Smart Communications*

"E-LOAD," a uniquely Filipino cellular invention, is winning commendations and converts overseas. Short for "electronic load," the breakthrough service loads up prepaid phones with small doses of airtime via SMS. This was pioneered by Smart Communications with its successful "Smart Load" which recently won a prestigious international award for innovation.

The e-load model is now being embraced by a growing number of operators in different countries and is seen to power the mobile industry's "next leap forward" in Asia.

Already, one major Indonesian operator, Indosat, has launched its own version of e-load. Two Thai mobile operators are likely to launch similar services in the first half of this year, according to a report on Asia Pacific telecoms released in February.

Smart Load was cited as the "Best Mobile Application or Service for Consumers" at the recent annual congress of the GSM Association (GSMA) in Cannes, France.

The GSMA is a global trade association consisting of more than 600 GSM mobile operators and 140 manufacturers and suppliers. Members currently provide mobile phone services to one billion customers in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

Speaking at Cannes, Smart president and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno said that Smart Load was a key element of the company's strategy to serve a much larger market for mobile phone services.

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SMART Load, a "sari-sari" store staple

The thrust of this strategy is to win many more subscribers from among what Nazareno calls "the financially challenged" sectors of society. In marketing parlance, these are the "C, D and E" consumers.

Cellular operators normally steer clear of such customers for fear that they pose too much risk while generating too little revenue. But Nazareno said this notion needed to be discarded. "Indeed, much of our future expansion depends on mastering the means of serving low-revenue customers," he said.

"Operators understandably tend to focus on serving high-revenue customers who offer better returns per capita... But, these subscribers make up only a small part of the total market," Nazareno said. "If we service only this segment, where would that leave us in terms of growth?"

Operators in other developing countries face a similar challenge and the success of the Smart Load provides them with a compelling model for broadening their own markets.

"As 2004 plays out, we expect to see over-the-air (OTAR) prepaid distribution becoming popular throughout developing markets," according to a report on Asia telecom strategy released last December by a major investment firm.

Aside from Thailand and Indonesia, other countries that may benefit from the e-load concept are China and India.

Smart has addressed the low-income market by taking its cue from soap and shampoo manufacturers who grew their markets by packaging their products in small affordable sachets.

"Indeed, selling in small packets is big business," Nazareno said. He cited the case of India, for example, where mini-packages costing a few US cents each made up half of the $2.4 billion sales in 2002 of the Anglo-Dutch giant Unilever.

In line with the sachet strategy, Smart Load comes in small packets worth P30, P60, P115 and P200. Moreover, it is fully electronic and does away completely with the usual prepaid top up cards.

Instead, Smart Load is sold "over the air" by an army of over 400,000 retailers who transfer loads to customers via specially formatted and secure text messages using their cell phones. As a result, Smart Load is not only far

PATINGI-TINGI/ B2-2

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JAGUAR
Born to perform

Showcasing the best of local products

By Amy R. Remo

NINE out of 10 registered firms nationwide are classified as small and medium-scale enterprises, which employ at least 70 percent of the labor force.

The SMEs' productivity level, however, is only at 30 percent, according to data from the Department of Trade and Industry.

It is for this reason that trade fairs are highly encouraged by DTI, such as the annual National Trade Fair held last February at the Megamall Trade Hall.

"The small and medium enterprises are the future of our country ... If we would be able to help improve (their) productivity level, the impact on our country would be tremendous," said Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima during the opening of the fair.

Managed by the Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development, the fair seeks to increase exposure of products to the domestic and foreign markets and improve their distribution among manufacturing and trade sectors.

The fair showcased furniture, decors, novelties, handwoven cloths, ceramics, processed food and ornamental plants.

The INQUIRER sat down with representatives of four SMEs who participated in the fair.

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To address this problem, the foundation's volunteers decided to engage in a livelihood project that would not only generate funds, but also provide employment for the townsfolk.

Thus, they thought of producing handmade paper, made of abaca and other indigenous materials.

The foundation sells decorative paper, wall decors, lampshade, postcards and bags to the local area as well as to nearby provinces. All proceeds go to the preschool funds.

Arlynne Balucio, one of the volunteers, relates that the business is doing good, but there is still a lot to be done as they can only snag a small share of the market.

Balucio hopes that the fair could provide them with the much needed exposure to help bring in more business.

SOME 95 percent of La Herminia Piña's customers are fashion designers.

PHOTOS BY JOHNNY VILLENA

Jiabong Mussel Producers and Vendors Multi-purpose Cooperative

Jiabong Mussel Producers & Vendors MPC in Samar was established in 1993 mainly to provide employment to the community.

According to its chair Demetrio Jumagdao, they decided to manufacture various products from mussels since they were abundant in Jiabong.

"We sought the help of DTI to give us proper training and teach us how to find a niche in the market for our products," says Jumagdao.

The co-op sells wall decors, trays, vases, jewelry boxes, frames and other shell craft made of mussel shells, as well as *tahong* crackers, *tahong* meat and processed mussel meat.

Jumagdao relates that in 1996, they decided to join the National Trade Fair to gain exposure for their products. The results were far from disappointing.

The co-op currently supplies various hotels and restaurants and even individuals with their products. And thankfully for the co-op, it has been this way for them for more than five years.

La Herminia Piña Weaving Industry

One would expect that the girls would be the first to earn from piña weaving. But in this case, it was a male who had the first crack.

"It was my brother (Allan) who was first taught by my mother (Doris) to weave," says Arlyne Tumbokon. "He was also the one who thought that this can become a big business."

So in 1996, the three of them—Arlyne, Allan and Doris—teamed up to form La Herminia Piña Weaving Industry.

Based in Buswang Old Kalibo, Aklan, La Herminia sells handwoven cloth made out of piña, abaca and cotton, as well as shawls and ternos. It started selling its products in stores in Lumban, Laguna and Divisoria.

Arlyne says that at first, they found it hard to penetrate the fabric market, facing stiff competition from other more experienced weavers. Even more difficult is trying to convince designers to acquire materials from them.

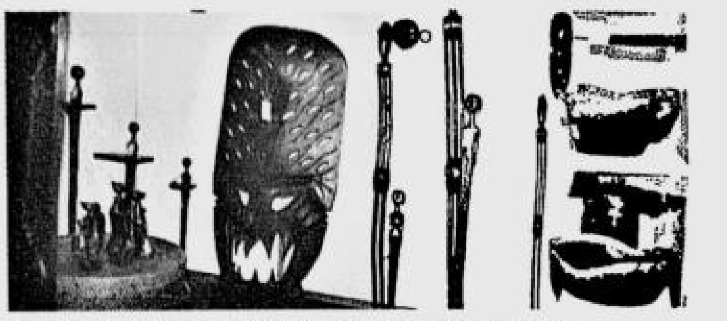
TAHONG crackers are among Jiabong Coop's best sellers

"We sought the help of Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI) so we can avail ourselves of training on advanced and special weaving," says Arlyne.

After the training, Arlyne again showed the newly designed fabrics to designers. This time, Arlyne found themselves swamped with orders.

From three weavers, they now have more than 100 weavers. Some 95 percent of their clients are fashion designers.

They have also started exporting their shawls and cloths to Japan and the United States.


MASKS are one of the specialties of Banaue Woodcarving

Banaue Woodcarving Shop

Her father was a carver while her mother took care of the finishing touches—and it has been this way for more than 30 years.

Mimi G. Nagnot says this was how the family-owned Banaue Woodcarving Shop flourished from its humble beginnings back in the '70s.

Based in Paypayan, Ifugao, Nagnot says they started manufacturing and delivering rough, unfinished wood and rattan products to dealers in Baguio, who in turn, would sell them to the locals and tourists and sometimes, export them.

Their products include wooden face masks, figurines, wall decors and stools.

After a few years, Nagnot says they were able to create a name for themselves, such that the dealers would rather go directly to Ifugao and order from them, than wait for what they would deliver to Baguio.

It also helped, says Nagnot, that trade fairs such as this, gave them ample exposure.

Nagnot adds they even have a few collectors among their throng of buyers.

The shop has also ventured to wholesale and soon, to exporting.

'Patingi-tingi' reaps loads

From page B2-1

more affordable than the old cards. It is also far more available—down to the *sari sari* store level.

"Smart Load is now as ubiquitous as Coke and candy. This has transformed buying prepaid reloads from a planned purchase into impulse buying," Nazareno said.

Usage of Smart Load quickly picked up after it was introduced in May 2003. By end-December, about 10 million Smart and Talk N Text subscribers—over 70 percent of the total—were reloading over the air and generating over two million transactions daily.

Smart Load has helped boost subscriber growth by helping keep old subscribers and winning new ones. In the last three quarters of 2003, Smart added 2.6 million new subscribers—at a time when many industry analysts expected cellular subscriber growth in the Philippines to slow down.

With other operators offering their own versions of the service, electronic loading has had an expansionary impact on the Philippine mobile industry as a whole. Before, it was thought the Philippines' wireless penetration rate could not exceed 25 percent—that means one out of four Filipinos would have cell phones—on account of the generally low incomes of a large chunk of the population. By end-2003, after less than a year of e-load, the penetration rate was estimated to have reached over 27 percent. Some industry analysts now say the rate may hit 34 percent this year and rise further to over 38 percent by 2005.

Smart Load-like services are expected to have a similar market-expanding impact in other countries. In the case of Thailand, for example, one estimate says the introduction of micro prepaid reloads will increase the addressable market for mobile by 30-40 percent, translating into 10-13 million potential new subscribers.

SMART president Napoleon Nazareno receiving the award at Cannes.

In Indonesia, assuming OTAR is launched in early 2005, there may be an increase in the addressable market size of 40-45 percent, translating into 14 million potential new customers, the report added.

'Grassroots promo' ...

From page B2-1

fuss to Villegas.

She employed "toll manufacturing" or contracting third-party companies to do some phases of the production.

"Toll manufacturing" enabled her company to expand its line of herbal products. She now produces capsules, herbal soap and ointment.

The "taheebo tea" came from the inner bark of a South American tree called Morado (*Tabebuia avellanedae Lor.*). But the "taheebo tea" and capsules were approved by the BFAD as food supplements.

Increasing patrons

Villegas claims that the efficacy of their company's products has increased the demand over the years.

She attributes the increasing number of patrons to the word-of-mouth dissemination of the benefits of their products.

They have already established marketing relations with big drug stores in their areas of operation. Patrons can now buy their products over the counter in selected drug stores.

The "grassroots promotion" she employs has somehow developed the patronage of the products of the Herbs & Nature Corp.

At present, Villegas uses the television medium to expand her products' promotion.

Dr. Romulo Nacional, a "taheebo tea" client, opines that the increasing exposure of Villegas' herbal products reinforces her position in the herbal product industry because, he says, the Philippines is slowly veering toward the use of alternative remedies that include herbal therapy.

Now on its 10th year, the Herbs & Nature Corp. has relied mainly on the "grassroots promotion" to sustain growth in sales.

From a single office it opened in Metro Manila in 1994, it now has branches in the cities of Naga, Legazpi, Cebu and the town of Daet in Camarines Norte province.

Complying with the requirements of the computer age

TAX-FILES

By Rafael C. Vinzon
and Vicki A. Ballesteros
SGV & Co.

THE ADVENT of computer technology is one of the major life-changing developments that today's generation has been privileged to see.

The rise of information technology has revolutionized many facets and details of everyday life. The integration of many activities by way of information technology has vastly affected the speed and efficiency of business operations and the complexity of commercial transactions.

Information technology is so pervasive that most business entities would not be able to cope without it.

It is with these circumstances in mind that the Bureau of Internal Revenue clarified its policies to adopt a computerized accounting system (CAS) through Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 71-2003, dated June 23, 2003.

Definition and components

A CAS is the integration of different component systems to produce computerized books of accounts and computer-generated accounting records and documents.

It is composed of a general journal and other subsidiary records and books on sales, purchases, accounts receivable, accounts payable and inventory. It also includes the payroll ledger, subsidiary ledger and other accounting records.

The CAS also includes any application system which generates a subsidiary ledger and is part of official accounting documents, such as official receipts, sales and cash invoices, cash vouchers, journal vouchers, billing statements and sales tickets.

It also includes any application system which generates reports required by the BIR and point-of-sale machines and/or cash register machines connected to a network or linked to a CAS.

Common CAS applications

One of the most common applications of the CAS is the Point-of-Sale (POS) terminal. This refers to a computerized replacement for a cash register. It is much more complex than the cash registers of even just a few years ago.

Basically, the POS system can include the ability to record and track customer orders, process credit and debit cards, connect to other systems in a particular network, and even manage inventory.

Generally, a POS terminal has, at its core, a personal computer, which is provided with application-specific programs and input/output devices for the particular environment in which it will serve.

For instance, in a fast-food establishment, the menu is already programmed into the POS terminal, such that one click of a button will represent an order for a meal and another button would result in the printing of the receipt.

POS terminals are used in most industries that have a point of sale such as a service desk, including restaurants, lodging, entertainment and museums.

It would also be useful to note that more often than not, POS terminals today are also Web-enabled, which makes remote training and operation possible. There are also instances when the POS terminal is capable of tracking inventory across locations.

Another common application of the CAS is cash register machine (CRM).

A CRM basically uses a firmware, which is installed on a chip called electronic programmable read-only memory (EPROM).

An electronic invoicing system (e-Invoicing) is in use by some companies today, and this also qualifies as a CAS application. This refers to the system developed and maintained by the e-Buyer or e-Seller or both in issuing invoice electronically through the Internet.

E-invoice includes sales invoices, official receipts, billing invoice, debit/credit notes or such other similar accounting documents issued electronically through the Internet.

Concerned taxpayers

Any taxpayer who makes use of a CAS is required to apply for a permit to adopt CAS. These include taxpayers who will use or adopt a complete CAS, any or some of the components of CAS, or an e-Invoicing system. Likewise, taxpayers who already have valid permits to adopt CAS but who made certain enhancements to or upgraded their systems have to apply for a permit as well.

Moreover, taxpayers whose CAS are provided by their consultants are also required to apply for a separate permit. In the same manner, affiliated companies, sister companies, franchises and closely held corporations are required to secure separate permits for the use of their respective CAS, whether or not they are sharing a server and using exactly the same system previously approved for use by its mother or sister companies.

Requirements

The application should be filed before the system is used or the enhanced system is adopted. Upon filing of the application, the following documentary requirements should be submitted: Accomplished BIR Form No. 1900; photocopy of BIR certificate of registration; location map of the place of business; inventory of previously approved unused invoices and receipts; application name and software used; functions and features of the application; system flow; process flow; sworn statement and proof of system ownership; back-up procedure; disaster and recovery plan; list of reports and correspondences that can be generated from the system: purpose and sample lay-out and a copy of system-generated loose-leaf books of accounts.

A more comprehensive list is provided in RMC 71-2003.

These requirements should be submitted and filed with the large taxpayer assistance division (LTAD) I or II, large taxpayer district office (LTDO) and revenue district office (RDO) having jurisdiction over the taxpayer's head office.

However, in case a particular branch adopts the CAS before the head office makes use of any CAS, the branch should file the application with the RDO having jurisdiction over it with a certification that the head office does not use a CAS.

If the head office later adopts the same CAS, and the branch with the previously issued permit shall be linked to it, the permit to be issued to the head office will include a new permit for the branch, which supersedes the previously issued permit.

On the other hand, if the branch adopts a different CAS from that of its head office, it should submit its application at the BIR office having jurisdiction over it.

Once the application has been duly filed, a BIR group, the Computerized System Evaluation Team (CSET), will then evaluate the system.

The CSET may ask for additional requirements if the need arises during a system demo or upon evaluation of the application. The taxpayer is required to comply with the requirements and answer the queries of the CSET regarding the details of the CAS in place.

It would be prudent for all taxpayers who are already using a CAS or who intend to make use of a CAS to keep these in mind.

At the end of the day, it is always much easier and more cost-efficient to comply with the requirements of regulatory authorities, than to later bear the consequences of non-compliance.

The benefits of the computer age come at a price, after all.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Showcasing the best of local products

By Amy R. Remo

NINE out of 10 registered firms nationwide are classified as small and medium-scale enterprises, which employ at least 70 percent of the labor force.

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PHOTOS BY JOHNNY VILLENA

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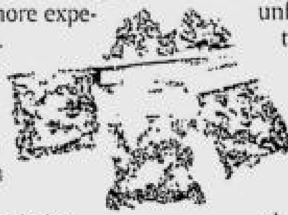

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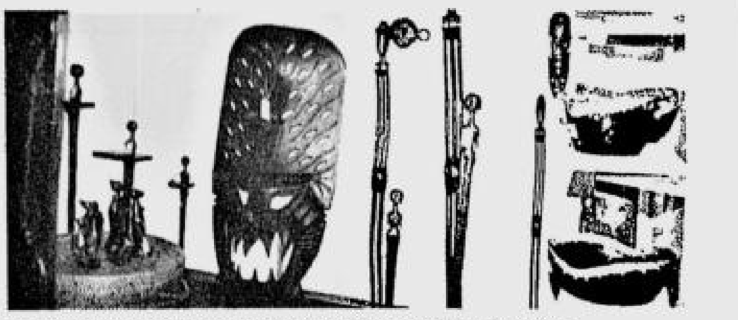
"We sought the help of Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI) so we can avail ourselves of training on advanced and special weaving," says Arlyne.

After the training, Arlyne again showed the newly designed fabrics to designers. This time, Arlyne found themselves swamped with orders.

From three weavers, they now have more than 100 weavers. Some 95 percent of their clients are fashion designers.

They have also started exporting their shawls and cloths to Japan and the United States.



MASKS are one of the specialties of Banaue Woodcarving

Banaue Woodcarving Shop

Her father was a carver while her mother took care of the finishing touches—and it has been this way for more than 30 years.

Mimi G. Nagnot says this was how the family-owned Banaue Woodcarving Shop flourished from its humble beginnings back in the '70s.

Based in Paypayan, Ifugao, Nagnot says they started manufacturing and delivering rough, unfinished wood and rattan products to dealers in Baguio, who in turn, would sell them to the locals and tourists and sometimes, export them.

Their products include wooden face masks, figurines, wall decors and stools.

After a few years, Nagnot says they were able to create a name for themselves, such that the dealers would rather go directly to Ifugao and order from them, than wait for what they would deliver to Baguio.

It also helped, says Nagnot, that trade fairs such as this, gave them ample exposure.

Nagnot adds they even have a few collectors among their throng of buyers.

The shop has also ventured to wholesale and soon, to exporting.

'Patingi-tingi' reaps loads

From page B2-1

more affordable than the old cards. It is also far more available—down to the *sari sari* store level.

"Smart Load is now as ubiquitous as Coke and candy. This has transformed buying prepaid reloads from a planned purchase into impulse buying," Nazareno said.

Usage of Smart Load quickly picked up after it was introduced in May 2003. By end-December, about 10 million Smart and Talk N Text subscribers—over 70 percent of the total—were reloading over the air and generating over two million transactions daily.

Smart Load has helped boost subscriber growth by helping keep old subscribers and winning new ones. In the last three quarters of 2003, Smart added 2.6 million new subscribers—at a time when many industry analysts expected cellular subscriber growth in the Philippines to slow down.

With other operators offering their own versions of the service, electronic loading has had an expansionary impact on the Philippine mobile industry as a whole. Before, it was thought the Philippines' wireless penetration rate could not exceed 25 percent—that means one out of four Filipinos would have cell phones—on account of the generally low incomes of a large chunk of the population. By end-2003, after less than a year of e-load, the penetration rate was estimated to have reached over 27 percent. Some industry analysts now say the rate may hit 34 percent this year and rise further to over 38 percent by 2005.

Smart Load-like services are expected to have a similar market-expanding impact in other countries. In the case of Thailand, for example, one estimate says the introduction of micro prepaid reloads will increase the addressable market for mobile by 30-40 percent, translating into 10-13 million potential new subscribers.

SMART president Napoleon Nazareno receiving the award at Cannes.

In Indonesia, assuming OTAR is launched in early 2005, there may be an increase in the addressable market size of 40-45 percent, translating into 14 million potential new customers, the report added.

'Grassroots promo' . . .

From page B2-1

fuss to Villegas.

She employed "toll manufacturing" or contracting third-party companies to do some phases of the production.

"Toll manufacturing" enabled her company to expand its line of herbal products. She now produces capsules, herbal soap and ointment.

The "taheebo tea" came from the inner bark of a South American tree called Morado (*Tabebuia avellanedae Lor.*). But the "taheebo tea" and capsules were approved by the BFAD as food supplements.

Increasing patrons

Villegas claims that the efficacy of their company's products has increased the demand over the years.

She attributes the increasing number of patrons to the word-of-mouth dissemination of the benefits of their products.

They have already established marketing relations with big drug stores in their areas of operation. Patrons can now buy their products over the counter in selected drug stores.

The "grassroots promotion" she employs has somehow developed the patronage of the products of the Herbs & Nature Corp.

At present, Villegas uses the television medium to expand her products' promotion.

Dr. Romulo Nacional, a "taheebo tea" client, opines that the increasing exposure of Villegas' herbal products reinforces her position in the herbal product industry because, he says, the Philippines is slowly veering toward the use of alternative remedies that include herbal therapy.

Now on its 10th year, the Herbs & Nature Corp. has relied mainly on the "grassroots promotion" to sustain growth in sales.

From a single office it opened in Metro Manila in 1994, it now has branches in the cities of Naga, Legazpi, Cebu and the town of Daet in Camarines Norte province.

Complying with the requirements of the computer age

By Rafael C. Vinzon
and Vicki A. Ballesteros
SGV & Co.

TAX-FILES

THE ADVENT of computer technology is one of the major life-changing developments that today's generation has been privileged to see.

The rise of information technology has revolutionized many facets and details of everyday life. The integration of many activities by way of information technology has vastly affected the speed and efficiency of business operations and the complexity of commercial transactions.

Information technology is so pervasive that most business entities would not be able to cope without it.

It is with these circumstances in mind that the Bureau of Internal Revenue clarified its policies to adopt a computerized accounting system (CAS) through Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 71-2003, dated June 23, 2003.

Definition and components

A CAS is the integration of different component systems to produce computerized books of accounts and computer-generated accounting records and documents.

It is composed of a general journal and other subsidiary records and books on sales, purchases, accounts receivable, accounts payable and inventory. It also includes the payroll ledger, subsidiary ledger and other accounting records.

The CAS also includes any application system which generates a subsidiary ledger and is part of official accounting documents, such as official receipts, sales and cash invoices, cash vouchers, journal vouchers, billing statements and sales tickets.

It also includes any application system which generates reports required by the BIR and point-of-sale machines and/or cash register machines connected to a network or linked to a CAS.

Common CAS applications

One of the most common applications of the CAS is the Point-of-Sale (POS) terminal. This refers to a computerized replacement for a cash register. It is much more complex than the cash registers of even just a few years ago.

Basically, the POS system can include the ability to record and track customer orders, process credit and debit cards, connect to other systems in a particular network, and even manage inventory.

Generally, a POS terminal has, at its core, a personal computer, which is provided with application-specific programs and input/output devices for the particular environment in which it will serve.

For instance, in a fast-food establishment, the menu is already programmed into the POS terminal, such that one click of a button will represent an order for a meal and another button would result in the printing of the receipt.

POS terminals are used in most industries that have a point of sale such as a service desk, including restaurants, lodging, entertainment and museums.

It would also be useful to note that more often than not, POS terminals today are also Web-enabled, which makes remote training and operation possible. There are also instances when the POS terminal is capable of tracking inventory across locations.

Another common application of the CAS is cash register machine (CRM).

A CRM basically uses a firmware, which is installed on a chip called electronic programmable read-only memory (EPROM).

An electronic invoicing system (e-Invoicing) is in use by some companies today, and this also qualifies as a CAS application. This refers to the system developed and maintained by the e-Buyer or e-Seller or both in issuing invoice electronically through the Internet.

E-invoice includes sales invoices, official receipts, billing invoice, debit/credit notes or such other similar accounting documents issued electronically through the Internet.

Concerned taxpayers

Any taxpayer who makes use of a CAS is required to apply for a permit to adopt CAS. These include taxpayers who will use or adopt a complete CAS, any or some of the components of CAS, or an e-Invoicing system. Likewise, taxpayers who already have valid permits to adopt CAS but who made certain enhancements to or upgraded their systems have to apply for a permit as well.

Moreover, taxpayers whose CAS are provided by their consultants are also required to apply for a separate permit. In the same manner, affiliated companies, sister companies, franchises and closely held corporations are required to secure separate permits for the use of their respective CAS, whether or not they are sharing a server and using exactly the same system previously approved for use by its mother or sister companies.

Requirements

The application should be filed before the system is used or the enhanced system is adopted. Upon filing of the application, the following documentary requirements should be submitted: Accomplished BIR Form No. 1900; photocopy of BIR certificate of registration; location map of the place of business; inventory of previously approved unused invoices and receipts; application name and software used; functions and features of the application; system flow; process flow; sworn statement and proof of system ownership; back-up procedure; disaster and recovery plan; list of reports and correspondences that can be generated from the system; purpose and sample lay-out and a copy of system-generated loose-leaf books of accounts.

A more comprehensive list is provided in RMC 71-2003.

These requirements should be submitted and filed with the large taxpayer assistance division (LTAD) I or II, large taxpayer district office (LTDO) and revenue district office (RDO) having jurisdiction over the taxpayer's head office.

However, in case a particular branch adopts the CAS before the head office makes use of any CAS, the branch should file the application with the RDO having jurisdiction over it with a certification that the head office does not use a CAS.

If the head office later adopts the same CAS, and the branch with the previously issued permit shall be linked to it, the permit to be issued to the head office will include a new permit for the branch, which supersedes the previously issued permit.

On the other hand, if the branch adopts a different CAS from that of its head office, it should submit its application at the BIR office having jurisdiction over it.

Once the application has been duly filed, a BIR group, the Computerized System Evaluation Team (CSET), will then evaluate the system.

The CSET may ask for additional requirements if the need arises during a system demo or upon evaluation of the application. The taxpayer is required to comply with the requirements and answer the queries of the CSET regarding the details of the CAS in place.

It would be prudent for all taxpayers who are already using a CAS or who intend to make use of a CAS to keep these in mind.

At the end of the day, it is always much easier and more cost-efficient to comply with the requirements of regulatory authorities, than to later bear the consequences of non-compliance.

The benefits of the computer age come at a price, after all.

When will biz scandals stop hitting the headlines?

IT SHOCKS us when companies disregard moral values and social responsibility. The latest breach of social responsibility is Europe's pharmaceutical company Parmalat's avarice dominating its business decisions.

The 2001 US-based energy company Enron and Andersen is now an infamous case, and it has been made into a movie entitled "Crooked E: Unshredded Truth about Enron." The unethical decisions on its financial processes are being documented to teach painful lessons to future generations of managers and CEOs.

We idolize Japan for its business and economic success. But in 1976, Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei was arrested for having received bribes from the Lockheed Aircraft Corp., a US firm. The scandal became uglier as it became clear that Lockheed had been paying at least $10 million in bribes and fees to Japanese politicians and industrialists since the 1950s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, new scandals shook the Japanese leading party, LDP. Sounds like biz scandals are just repeating themselves.

Investigations of the dealings of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) created one of the largest international banking scandals in history. Through a global network of branches and subsidiaries, the bank defrauded investors and conducted illegal transactions around the world. In the United States, former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford and others were accused of aiding the bank in its illegal operations. Cartoonists portrayed the BCCI as an evil octopus embracing the globe. Wits nicknamed it the Bank of Crooks and Criminals International.

The public demands the integration of business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in business education. The principles and practice of CSR should be introduced prior to the entry of the workforce into the business world to ensure that CSR becomes an essential part of business life.

The role of ethics and CSR is to remind firms that their main objective cannot be profit maximization alone, but must also include adherence to ethical standards, so that business benefits all and not only a few.

When the Harvard Business School (HBS) offered the first course on business ethics in 1915, there were few takers, and most students were bewildered about what they were supposed to learn from the class. Today, more than 95 percent of business schools in the United States offer ethics, corporate governance, sustainable business and corporate social responsibility (CSR) courses as regular subjects—despite the fact that Milton Friedman's hardcore theory of profit maximization for shareholders continues to hold sway with intense pressure in the business universe.

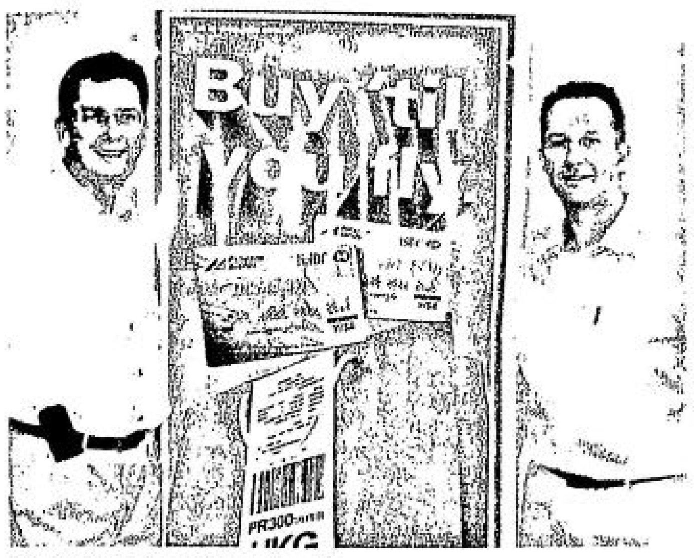
Ethics and CSR should be taught in business schools so that future businessmen would, at the very least, know what they should not do. The De La Salle University Professional Schools, Inc. Graduate School of Business, through its Center for Corporate Social Responsibility and Human Development (CSRHD), will hold a Research Conference on the "New Trends in Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility" at its RCBC Campus, Makati City, on March 19 and 20.

In this CSR Research Conference, Bro. Louis DeThomasis, FSC, President of Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, will talk about international debt and poverty alleviation. CHED Chairman Bro. Rolando Dizon, FSC, will speak about the integration of CSR in higher education.

For more information call 523-4295.

It's not the way it looks, it's what the card can do

By Margie Quimpo-Espino



MARTIN Cook and James Benoit

VICENTE Carlos and Avelino Zapanta

NO, HSBC is not going to launch a tiny card that one can wear as a necklace. Nor a fancy shaped one.

Its executives say they would rather invest on a card's features than on its physical look.

"All cards should have tangible benefits. It's not just the design," says James Benoit, SVP for marketing. "You make sure your cards have values and it is not just full of toys."

"The key is for your card to be top of wallet. We won't get fancy-shaped cards. It's all about building values," adds Martin Cook, SVP for personal financial services.

HSBC's newest card is the gold Mabuhay Miles Visa which is a co-brand card with the Philippines Airlines. A year and a half ago, the bank and PAL launched the Classic and according to James Benoit, SVP for marketing, the market reaction exceeded their expectations, in terms of volume and value of transactions so they gave in to their clients' clamor for a gold card.

The co-branded card basically allows a shopper to earn mileage points with PAL every time he uses the card. Every P45 spent gives him a mile point. Gold card holders will earn triple mileage points when they shop in certain stores or eat in particular restaurants.

The challenge is actually making consumers use their credit cards more than cash. "It's a habit and it takes time to change. It does not make sense for you to use cash for eating out. Using a card carries delayed repayments. And you don't have to carry excess cash around," says Benoit.

Of course he cautions that "credit cards is not income. It is a way to manage your finances."

He points out that the new credit cards being launched are gearing towards the lifestyles of the target markets. "It's getting more and more lifestyle driven."

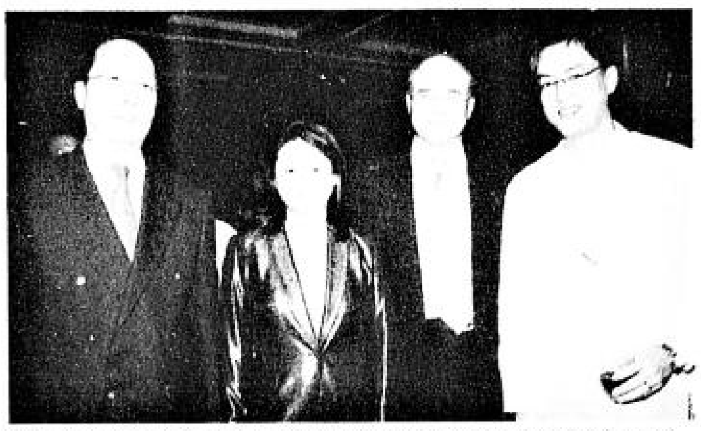
Its HSBC Red Card for example is geared towards women's needs.

Cook explains that for the Mabuhay Miles card the question is very simple— do you aspire to travel? "It's very focused. This we know works."

Cook says HSBC and PAL are in for a long-term relationship. He says it is rare that a flag carrier ties us with a foreign bank. He says the co-branding encourages travelers to just stick to one airline when flying.

The two officials admit there are costs attached tie-ups with merchants but the pluses are mutually beneficial.

HSBC has a relationship with Store Specialists Inc. shops that include Kate Spate, Marks and Spencer, Kenneth Cole.



ERNIE and Claire Yap, Warner Manning of HSBC and Michael Tan of Asia Brewery Inc.

GEORGE Yang, Marixi Prieto, Julie Manning and Kristine Yang

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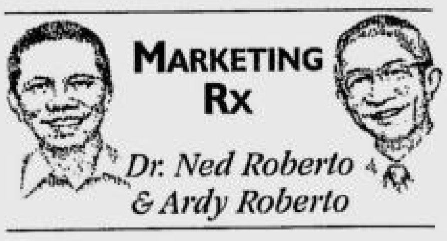
Reducing price may back-fire on you

Conclusion



Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

NOW, if you reduce price, analyze how this will affect your premium consumers. It's highly likely that you will alienate most, if not all of them. That means further lost sales. Why can this happen? It's because they won't believe that you can maintain high quality with such a price reduction to match the pricing of the cheap competitor products.

Your lower price won't also bring back your lapsed consumers to your brand. Most will be resentful and say: "So, after all you can significantly lower price. Why did you do that only now? You took advantage of us all this time and for so long. You #*@!%+?&"

By trying to get your premium brand to the price consumers via a lower price while holding on to your premium consumers based on your brand equity, you'll find that you're likely to lose both. If you want a piece of the action in the price consumer segment, come in with your own low-priced brand or variant with as good or slightly better minimum quality versus the available low priced competitors.

This is what Tang did when it launched Kool Aid. To hold on to your premium consumer segment, you're better off reinforcing your premium brand's perceived strength: that it is first and foremost high quality available at a value-for-money price and therefore specifically tailored to their priority values for a premium brand.

This is essentially a market segmentation strategy. If you're faced with an evolving market that has partitioned into two segments, a premium segment and a low priced segment, you can't satisfy both by your premium brand alone. If you lower your premium brand's price, you damage your brand equity in the eyes of your premium consumers and you lose your hold on them. If you enter the low-priced segment with your lower priced premium brand, you won't be credible to consumers in this segment because they'll resent your lowering your price only now when you could have done it way before.

The second part of this market segmentation strategy says that to succeed in two market segments with two differing priority product values, you should have either two brands or two distinct variants of one brand each specifically suited to satisfy the priority values of each of the two segments. This means that you should keep your premium brand in the premium segment. If you want to meet low priced competitors, then do so by your own low priced brand or variant.

The wisdom of introducing into the low priced segment your own low-priced brand or variant is in being able to catch the price consumers who are leaving your premium brand. Many if not most of them will stay with your company via your low-priced brand or variant. This way then, you won't be giving them away to the low-priced competitors because you did not have a low-priced brand or variant of your own to attract them and satisfy their own priority values.

So it is a strategic market segmentation error to lower the price of your premium brand in order to answer the threat of a growing number of low-priced competitors. The next time your trade customers asked you to lower the price of your premium brand, tell them that you're coming out with your own low-priced brand or variant. You'll see the excitement in their eyes when you announce this. The trade people are the first to know that this is the strategically correct market segmentation move to take.

(For comments or questions, e-mail at MarketingRx@SaltandLightVentures.com. We'll be re-launching our new text-in cell number in next week's column. The MRx cell phone we used two columns ago was stolen!)

Garment maker takes ounce of prevention

By Ian Jester M. de Vera
Contributor, UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries

PREVENTION is better than cure.

Entrepreneur Ma. Carisa Tiangco-Cervantes, vice president of Karissa Apparel Inc., well-known office-uniform maker, realized the wisdom of early prevention to keep her business above water. Even as her enterprise seemed stable, she learned to look out for early signs of distress to avoid the expenses and trouble related to rehabilitation.

Carisa remembered it was her passion for fashion designing that drove her to put up her own shop. An accounting graduate from De La Salle University, she worked for a time as external auditor in an accounting firm. To satisfy her passion, she took a course in dressmaking and made a hobby out of it. When she quit her job and began to think of setting up a business, she naturally turned to what was formerly "just a hobby."

Karissa Apparel is the offshoot of Karissa Clothes Shoppe, which she founded in October 1990 as a custom-made garment shop. On July 19, 1995, Karissa Apparel was incorporated with Carisa's father, Manuel, serving as president.

Early diagnosis

Carisa did not feel there was anything wrong with her business. Even while the garment industry declined because of the Asian financial crisis in the late '90s, Karissa Apparel managed to keep afloat. But Carisa was not one to remain complacent.

A program on rehabilitating distressed enterprises (PRIDE) which she took at the University of the Philippines Institute for Small-Scale Industries (UP ISSI) taught her that assessing the health of a business is not just for ailing firms.

Diagnosing or analyzing the problems of an enterprise, as she learned to do, requires the diagnosis of its marketing, production and operations, human resource and finance. In her case, she thought there was nothing wrong with how she handled her business since she was relying heavily on its production advantage. However, after checking up her supposedly healthy company, she found out that such practice could be detrimental to the marketing and administration aspects of her business.

Where before she indiscriminately accepted whatever production orders came her way, she learned to niche after the training. Soon she identified this niche to be corporate uniforms. As she focused her production resources on this line, Karissa Apparel was on its way to becoming a reliable new brand in uniforms.

Recovery

Carisa survived even as other garment producers have collapsed, no thanks to the onslaught of cheap garment imports. This in itself is a remarkable achievement, which she attributes to the early diagnosis she made of her operations.

Once you have identified your problems, these are half-solved, she says. You will know how you can improve it and this will make you competitive. "If you cannot collect [receivables], there is probably something wrong with your product. Improve your competitiveness by producing higher-quality products and services."

Carisa believes that an early diagnosis of problems helps keep a business in competitive shape.

Complacency

She guards against complacency. Firms that think they are already the best are in danger of atrophy. They stop trying, learning and improving. "But once we tell ourselves that there are still new things to learn, we are kept on our toes."

Among Karissa Apparel's clientele include banks, insurance and health-care firms, government firms and multinational companies. It also serves the uniform requirements of restaurants, specialty stores and industrial factories.

Had Carisa not diagnosed her business early, she figures she would have been preparing a rehabilitation plan at this time. Fortunately, she had caught the symptoms early and prevented them from getting worse.

She admonishes other entrepreneurs "not to let the grass grow under their feet." Even if they're not in present trouble, they must be constantly on the lookout for danger signals. There are tools small business owners can use to recognize early signs of trouble.

(Ma. Carisa Tiangco-Cervantes attended the Program on Rehabilitating Distressed Enterprises of the UP Institute for Small-Scale Industries. For inquiries call Tess Santos at 9287076 to 79 local 165 or send a fax to 9206923.)

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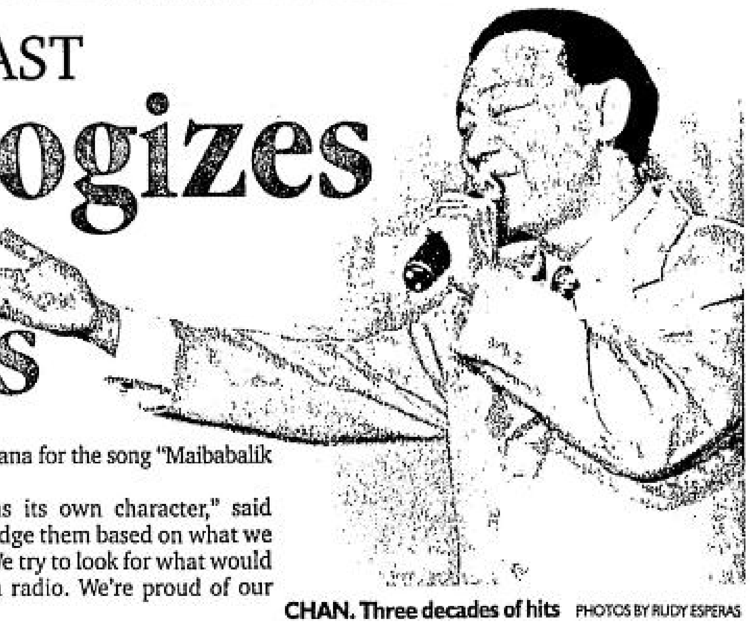
ENTERTAINMENT
E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

'HIMIG HANDOG' TELECAST

ABS-CBN apologizes for running wrong credits

By Marinel R. Cruz



CHAN. Three decades of hits PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

DESPITE its delayed telecast of the "Himig Handog" finals last March 6 on ABS-CBN Channel 2, the network was not spared from embarrassment.

It ran erroneous credits during the all-star tribute segment of the songwriting competition.

ABS-CBN has apologized for the error, blaming a "technical malfunction" in their digital character generator. Because of the glitz, the captions that run during the tribute were incompatible with the composer that the segment was paying tribute to and the songs of the composer.

That composer is Jose Marie Chan, maker of immortal pop songs, which were sung during the tribute.

ABS-CBN also apologized for not being able to repair the technical malfunction in time for the scheduled broadcast.

Correct credits

The corrected credits for that production number should have been: "Beautiful Girl," "Can We Just Stop and Talk A While," "Please Be Careful with My Heart," "Refrain"—by Jose Mari Chan; "Hahanapin Ko"—music by Jose Mari Chan and lyrics by Jimmy Santiago; "Say That You Love Me," "Tell Me"—by Louie Ocampo and Alan Ayque; "Ikaw"—by Louie Ocampo and George Canseco; "Narito ang Puso Ko"—by Myra Meriales and Gary Valenciano; "Sana Maulit Muli"—by Gary Valenciano and Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano.

"The success of 'Himig Handog Love Songs' finals night would not have been possible without the presence of the most respected composers in the industry, namely Jose Mari Chan, Louie Ocampo, Gary Valenciano and George Canseco," the statement said.

Future hits

Winning songs would most likely become future hits, according to master composer Ryan Cayabyab, chair of the board of judges of this year's competition.

Although the performance of the artist during the final night helped a lot in showcasing the entries, Cayabyab stressed that the judges had put more weight on how well the songs sounded in their recorded version.

He added that the recorded versions of the finalists were given to the judges weeks before the final night.

"But we made sure not to discuss with each other which among the finalists are our favorites," Cayabyab said. "We are independent thinkers and are not swayed by other judges."

Proud of choices

The romantic ballad "Kailan Kita Mamahalin" bagged the best song title and a P200,000 prize for its composer, Arnel de Pano and interpreter Anna Fegi. It also collected the Listener's Choice award.

Chona Borromeo's "Narito Lang Ako" won the award for Highly Commended and P100,000 in cash. The song's interpreter, Aegis, received the best interpreter award and P50,000.

The texter's choice and buyer's choice awards and P100,000 prize were given to composer Marc Bryan Adona and interpreter Michael Josh Santana for the song "Maibabalik Ko Ba?"

"Each song has its own character," said Cayabyab. "We judge them based on what we hear on the CD. We try to look for what would likely be a hit on radio. We're proud of our choices."

WINNERS ALL. Fegi and De Pano

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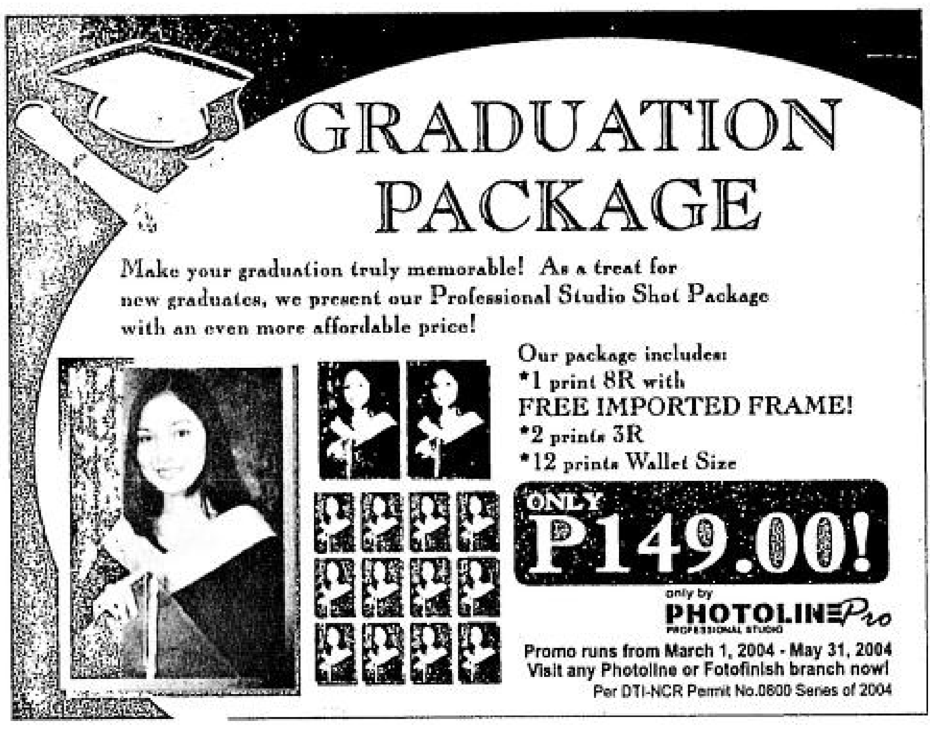

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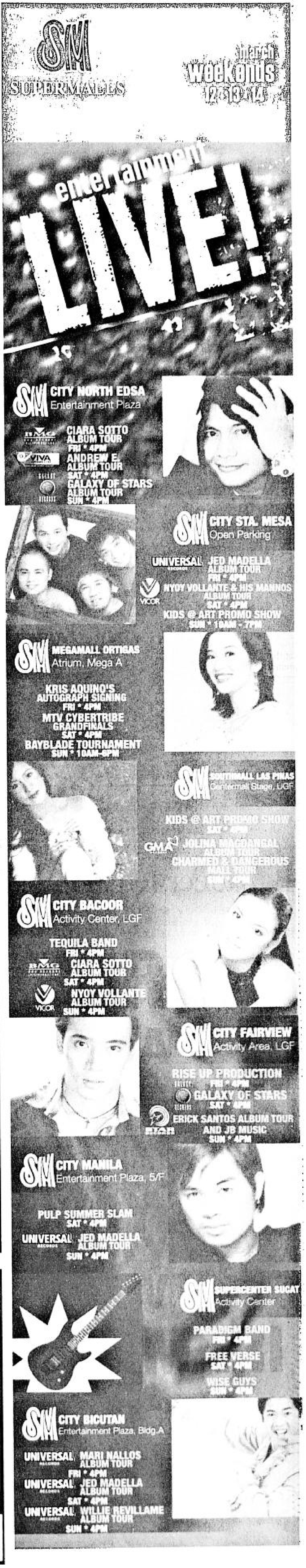

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By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

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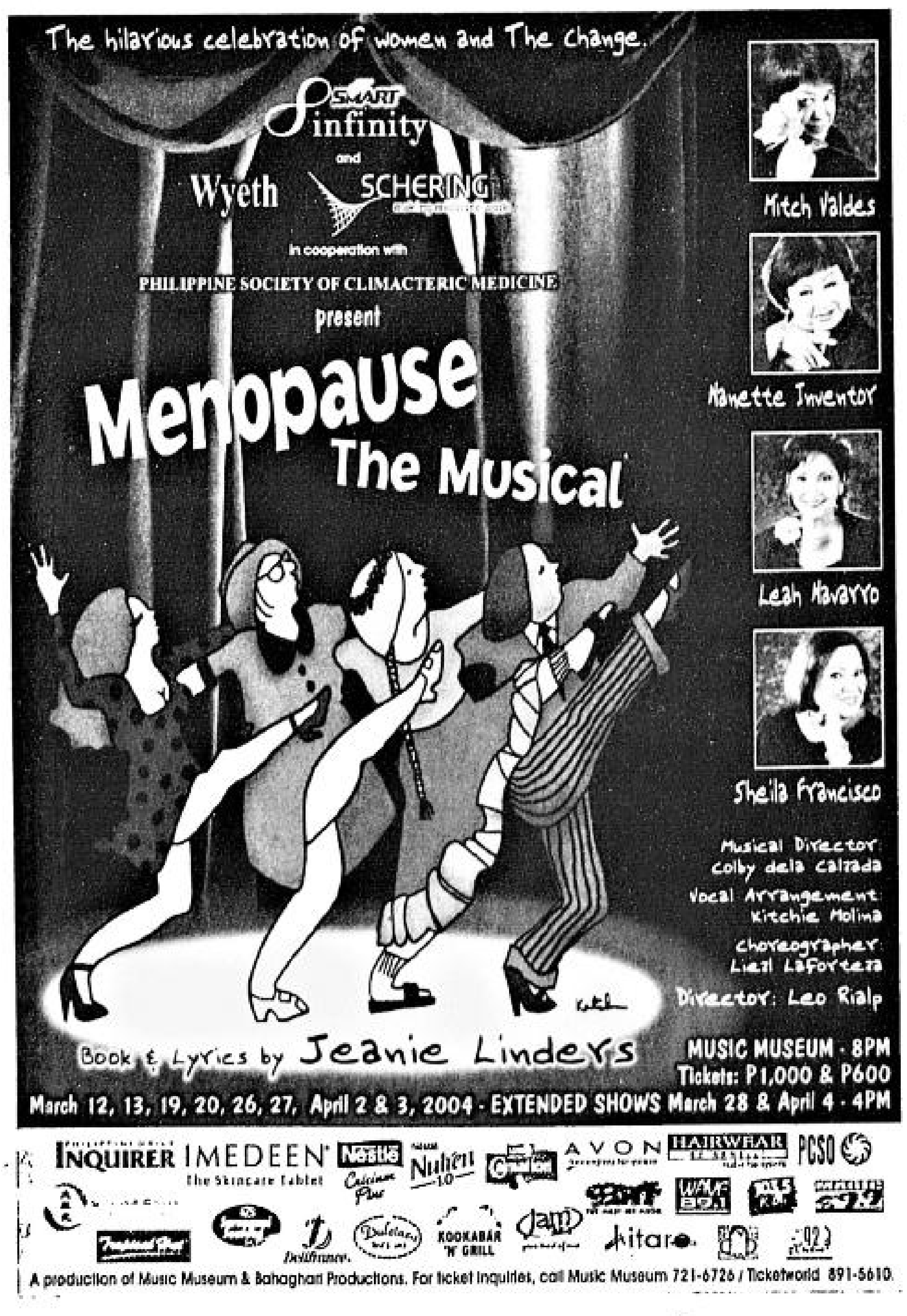

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In the swim

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AS we predicted last month, Channel 2's new soap, "Marina," has turned out to be a big hit on the TV screen, demolishing the competition with its high ratings, particularly during its first week.

It's the first TV soap about a mermaid, and local viewers have been enamored with mermaids ever since "Dyesebel," so the new series' success was pretty much assured.

Viewers are also impressed with the continuing series' production values, the difficulty of filming the show's underwater scenes, and the presence of good actors like **Snooky Serna** and **Joel Torre** in the cast.

However, as the storyline veers away from Marina's swimming in the sea to "growing" legs and walking on terra firma, there is a perceptible decrease in interest value, since the show starts to look like many other soaps on the tube.

Thus, to hold on to its unique advantage, "Marina" should try to keep its "mermaid factor" in play as often as possible. We know that it's less expensive to tape on land, but sequences set in the briny deep have to be sustained.

The soap's fantasy element is another major draw, so the show should continue to include animated sequences in its installments. And it should go beyond the relatively rudimentary animation it currently employs, to keep easily-sated viewers continually fascinated.

In terms of performance, the show favors florid melodrama, which can get pretty shrill and enervating after a while.

We do understand that the series" title character had to be tormented by mega-villains to emerge as a true-blue heroine in soap aficionados' eyes, but resident villainesses **Cherie Gil** and **Elizabeth Oropesa**'s portrayals are occasionally too strident to take.

Nickelodeon Awards

THE DEADLINE for the submission of entries to the Nickelodeon kids' Choice Awards is on March 15. The winner, along with a friend and two chaperones, will go on a free trip to Los Angeles, USA to watch the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards on April 3.

The contest is open to kids 15 years old and under. They should answer the question, "Who won as Favorite Cartoon in the 2003 Kids' Choice Awards?," attach a 500-gram proof of purchase of Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdog, and include name, phone number, birthday, postal address, email address and cable operator.

Nyoy salutes the Beatles

NYOY Volante and Mannos pay tribute to the Beatles in their new concert series at Republic of Malate on March 11 and 25, April 1, 2, 3, 22 and 23, and May 6, 13 and 20.

Beatles hits will be updated by Nyoy and Mannos members **Cocoy Aranas**, **Jerome Nuñez**, **Maynard Albis** and **Glenn Dalit**. Concert beneficiaries are the indigent patients of East Avenue Medical Center's Department of Dermatology. Call 533-8153 or 551-7252.

Jennylyn Mercado

"STARSTRUCK" winner **Jennylyn Mercado** is now a show biz sensation with her own enthusiastic fan following. Last year, however, she was just one of many struggling starlets trying to get a crack at stardom.

She got her first boost before joining "Starstruck" when she was tapped to appear in a 30-second TV commercial for Bambini Cologne by The Rogemson Company, along with four other teens—**Gayle**, **Yvette**, **Paula** and **Achi**. In fact, Jennylyn's "Starstuck" colleagues call her "Bambini Girl."

Jennylyn's star is burning bright with shows like "Love to Love," "Click," "SOP," and a new soap featuring all 14 "Starstuck" finalists. She's also signed a recording contract.

New seasons

POPULAR Star World series are launching their new season: The blue-collar comedy "The King of Queens" on March 15, and the gritty police drama, "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" on March 23. New episodes of "For Love or Money" started telecasting last March 1.

'Kayumanggi'

FILIPINO composers and artists are at the forefront of the 2004 Special Concert Series of the San Miguel Foundation for the Performing Arts.

Opening the series on March 13 is "Kayumanggi," a concert of works for a cappella and accompanied voices featuring The San Miguel Master Chorale, and guest conductor **Eudenice Palaruan** with The San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra at the CCP.

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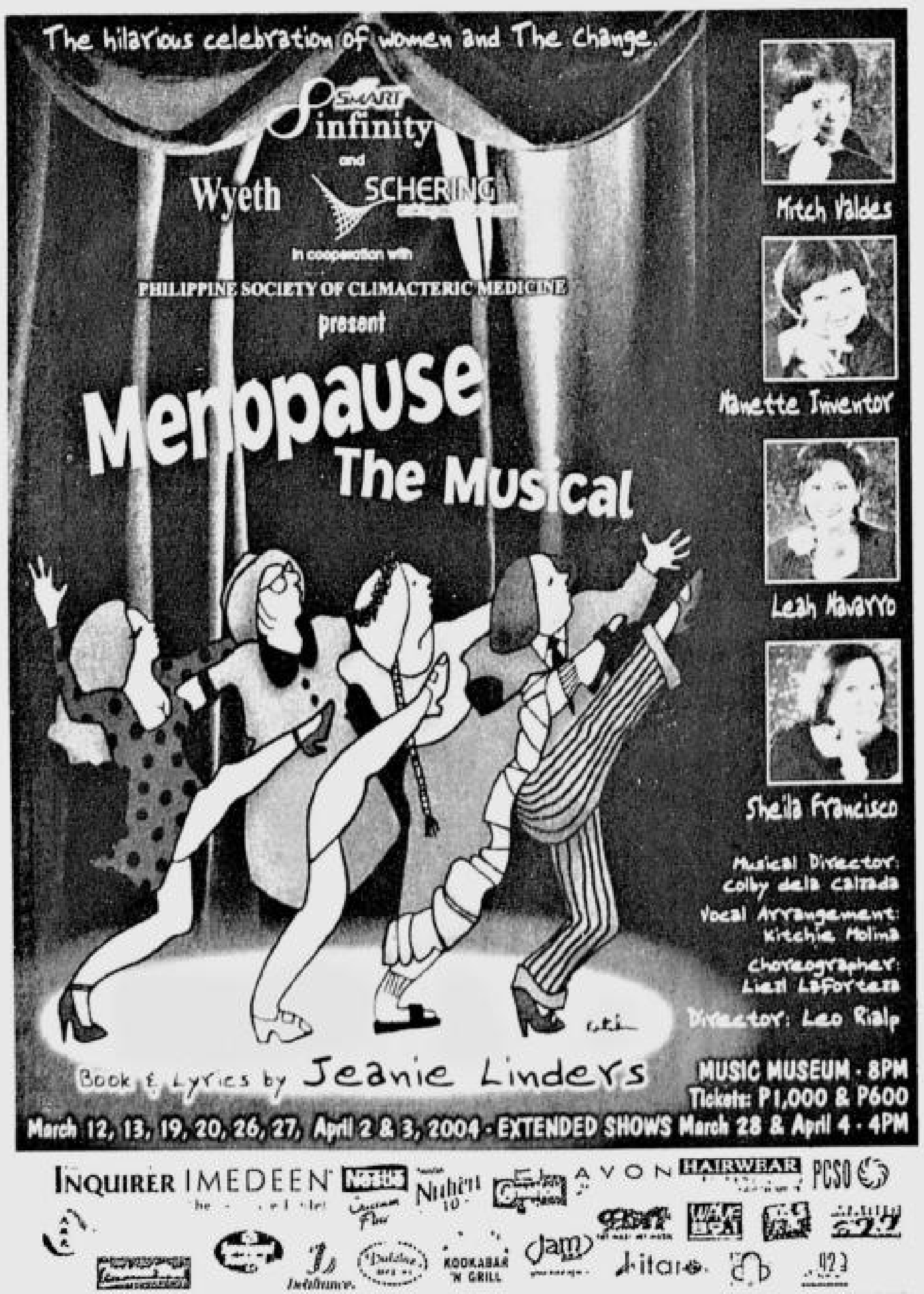
"Star in A Million" finalist and upcoming recording artist Christian Bautista first joined Playshop in 2002.

Classes begin April 12 to June 5, 2004. For inquiries, call Trumpets Playshop at 6362842 or 6335010 or visit the office at the 6th Level Carpark, Shangri-La Mall, Mandaluyong City. E-mail: playshop"i-manila.com.ph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In the swim

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

AS we predicted last month, Channel 2's new soap, "Marina," has turned out to be a big hit on the TV screen, demolishing the competition with its high ratings, particularly during its first week.

It's the first TV soap about a mermaid, and local viewers have been enamored with mermaids ever since "Dyesebel," so the new series' success was pretty much assured.

Viewers are also impressed with the continuing series' production values, the difficulty of filming the show's underwater scenes, and the presence of good actors like **Snooky Serna** and **Joel Torre** in the cast.

However, as the storyline veers away from Marina's swimming in the sea to "growing" legs and walking on terra firma, there is a perceptible decrease in interest value, since the show starts to look like many other soaps on the tube.

Thus, to hold on to its unique advantage, "Marina" should try to keep its "mermaid factor" in play as often as possible. We know that it's less expensive to tape on land, but sequences set in the briny deep have to be sustained.

The soap's fantasy element is another major draw, so the show should continue to include animated sequences in its installments. And it should go beyond the relatively rudimentary animation it currently employs, to keep easily-sated viewers continually fascinated.

In terms of performance, the show favors florid melodrama, which can get pretty shrill and enervating after a while.

We do understand that the series' title character had to be tormented by mega-villains to emerge as a true-blue heroine in soap aficionados' eyes, but resident villainesses Cherie Gil and Elizabeth Oropesa's portrayals are occasionally too strident to take.

Nickelodeon Awards

THE DEADLINE for the submission of entries to the Nickelodeon kids' Choice Awards is on March 15. The winner, along with a friend and two chaperones, will go on a free trip to Los Angeles, USA to watch the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards on April 3.

The contest is open to kids 15 years old and under. They should answer the question, "Who won as Favorite Cartoon in the 2003 Kids' Choice Awards?," attach a 500-gram proof of purchase of Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdog, and include name, phone number, birthday, postal address, email address and cable operator.

Nyoy salutes the Beatles

NYOY Volante and Mannos pay tribute to the Beatles in their new concert series at Republic of Malate on March 11 and 25, April 1, 2, 3, 22 and 23, and May 6, 13 and 20.

Beatles hits will be updated by Nyoy and Mannos members Cocoy Aranas, Jerome Nuñez, Maynard Albis and Glenn Dalit. Concert beneficiaries are the indigent patients of East Avenue Medical Center's Department of Dermatology. Call 533-8153 or 551-7252.

Jennylyn Mercado

"STARSTRUCK" winner Jennylyn Mercado is now a show biz sensation with her own enthusiastic fan following. Last year, however, she was just one of many struggling starlets trying to get a crack at stardom.

She got her first boost before joining "Starstruck" when she was tapped to appear in a 30-second TV commercial for Bambini Cologne by The Rogemson Company, along with four other teens—Gayle, Yvette, Paula and Achi. In fact, Jennylyn's "Starstuck" colleagues call her "Bambini Girl."

Jennylyn's star is burning bright with shows like "Love to Love," "Click," "SOP," and a new soap featuring all 14 "Starstuck" finalists. She's also signed a recording contract.

New seasons

POPULAR Star World series are launching their new season: The blue-collar comedy "The King of Queens" on March 15, and the gritty police drama, "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" on March 23. New episodes of "For Love or Money" started telecasting last March 1.

'Kayumanggi'

FILIPINO composers and artists are at the forefront of the 2004 Special Concert Series of the San Miguel Foundation for the Performing Arts.

Opening the series on March 13 is "Kayumanggi," a concert of works for a cappella and accompanied voices featuring The San Miguel Master Chorale, and guest conductor Eudenice Palaruan with The San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra at the CCP.

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SHOW TIME

Basil sings with Piolo

POP stalwart Basil Valdez is the special guest of actor Piolo Pascual in his concert "My Gift: Piolo Pascual First Time in Concert."

The concert on April 24, 2004, 8 p.m., at the Araneta Coliseum, will be fulfilling Piolo's dream to perform with the man whom he has idolized for as long as he can remember.

Other guests in his concert are Akafellas, Old School, Michelle Ayalde, Ai Ai De Las Alas and The Hunks.

Tickets at PhP 2,000, PhP 1,500, PhP 1,200, PhP 1,000, PhP 750, PhP 500 and PhP 300 are now available through TicketNet and the Star Records office.

For ticket inquiries and reservations, check out the TicketNet at all SM Department Stores and the Araneta Coliseum Box Office.

You can also visit www.ticketnet.com.ph or call 915-5555 and the Star Records Concert desk at 4155834 or 4155835.

"My Gift: Piolo Pascual First Time in Concert" is presented by Star Records, in cooperation with ABS-CBN, Pinoycentral, official music channel MYX, ABS-CBN Publishing, Hammerhead, Venice Jewellers and official radio stations WRR 101.9, I-FM, 96.3 WRock and Kool 106.

Messianic Complex

An intense, bloody, personal epic in a pocket

REVIEW

By Ruel S. De Vera

BEYOND the politics and the religious significance of "The Passion of the Christ," the movie is also the third and most personal film thus far from director Mel Gibson.

As far as opening scenes are concerned, this one was a classic. Under a foreboding full moon, Jesus (James Caviezel) is agonizing over what is to come next in the Garden of Gethsemane, while Satan (Rosalinda Celentano) slithers about, trying to tempt Him.

There is nothing quite like having to bring to the big screen a story which most people are familiar with. But Gibson decided to adapt (together with co-screenwriter Benedict Fitzgerald) the closing portions of the New Testament's Gospels, choosing to focus on the last 12 hours leading to Jesus' death at Golgotha, amplifying the elements of grand drama which have always been present in the Passion Play. All that, plus Filipinos' familiarity with the story, means the movie will play well to local audiences.

Fills in blanks

From Gethsemane, Jesus, as he is betrayed by Judas (Luca Lionello), is beset by the conspiracy of the Pharisees and, with the refusal of the Romans to intervene, is put to death via crucifixion. Along the way, Gibson fills in the blanks, including everyone from Veronica to Joseph of Arimathea in his narrative. Through clever flashback sequences, Gibson depicts Jesus as the humble carpenter and funny yet affectionate son, as well as the central figure at the Last Supper. "Passion" also helps the audience see more of the final hours through the eyes of Mary (Maia Morgenstern), who follows her son all throughout the ordeal.

Much ink has been spilled on the amount of blood in this movie and, indeed, the violence and pain in "Passion" flows to gruesome proportions—by design. Gibson clearly wants to show just how much Christ suffered, spending a lot of screen time on two particularly painful scenes: the scourging and the crucifixion itself. Indeed, these two scenes may be among the most graphic scenes ever filmed. One almost expects blood to start dripping off the screen. It is clear that Gibson intends "Passion" to be a meditation on faith and suffering. While the movie is not for the faint of heart, children, in particular, should not see this movie. It is that graphic.

Yet in the process, Gibson directs the grittiest, most detailed depiction of the death of Christ yet. This early, moviegoers should be aware that the entire movie is told in the ancient Aramaic and Latin tongues, thus giving the movie the feel of a foreign language film. If you don't like subtitles, this would be a difficult movie to follow—except that most people already know what's going to happen. One wonders instead how this movie would play to an audience unfamiliar with the story of Christ, particularly with Gibson's choosing to jettison most of Christ's backstory and eschewing the miraculous scenes involving the bread and the wine, for example. By using cutting-edge technology and technique to tell his story, Gibson crafts a different kind of Christ film, a modern iteration on an often-filmed story.

Unearthly presence

He also gets the best performance thus far from Caviezel, whose baleful stare had been glimpsed in snippets in movies as diverse as 2000's "Frequency" and 2001's "Angel Eyes." Caviezel had always had a rather unearthly screen presence, but it has never been harnessed the way it has here. Caviezel is quite effective as Jesus, portraying Christ with human frailty but also divine resolve.

JAMES Caviezel as Jesus in the most graphic portrayal of His suffering and crucifixtion.

Androgynous Satan

The relatively unknown yet strong supporting cast completes the tableau. Most impressive is the steadfast and yet heartbroken performance by Morgenstern as Mary. She proves to be a nearly mute yet deeply affecting witness to the trails and tribulations of Christ. While Celentano casts a creepy shadow over the proceedings as a disturbing, androgynous Satan, the villain of the movie is the priest Caiphas, portrayed with venom and vigor by Mattia Sbragia. Audiences will never notice how good Sbragia is until they realize how much they truly loathe Caiphas in "Passion." Also a standout is the indecisive, sympathetic but ultimately inutile Pontius Pilate (Hristo Naumov Shopov). In a commendable change of pace, Monica Bellucci puts in an understated turn as Mary Magdalene.

Upon closer inspection, "Passion" is empowered by Gibson's vision. Together with cinematographer Caleb Deschanel (1984's "The Natural"), Gibson brings the camera right up to the very face of Christ as He goes through this terrible ordeal. When the camera flips and the audience suddenly sees what Jesus is seeing, it is a bracing and involving experience. And make no mistake about it, the torture scenes are so real, it's hard not to get emotional. "Passion" highlights elements such as Mary's devotion to her Son while also giving less time to Jesus' time with His apostles.

Epic in a pocket

With its visual effects and stunning production design, "Passion" feels authentic and inclusive. John Debney's sweeping score gives the movie an abundance of majesty and mystery. That sense also fills the screen. Though the movie clocks in just under two hours, it actually feels longer, deliberately excruciating at parts and yet carrying the load of its source material, becoming, in effect, an epic in a pocket.

ULTRA leaves Light in the dark

Hanging out in the coolest places in town may not be half as fun without a nice cold beer or two. Speaking of beer, the hip thing is to go for light beer. But what if light becomes even lighter? Say... Ultra light.

Too good to be true? Not quite, for here comes Lone Star Ultra. The first light beer in the country made Ultra light by lowering its carbohydrate content to less than a fourth of regular beer. Lone Star Ultra brings new meaning to beer drinking because one gets to indulge without the bulge.

While light beer prides itself on its low calorie content, Ultra goes even further by not just having less calories than light beer but touting less carbohydrates as well. All of that, plus the fact that it retains the same alcohol content as regular beer.

With low carb, fat is automatically broken down except glucose for energy. So, gulping down an Ultra not only promises a great time, but keeps tabs on the waistline too. How can you go wrong with that?

That's probably why Ultra is likely to become the toast of the inimitably stylish fashionistas, the music groupies and yes, the figure conscious. Lone Star Ultra offers the fun that beer drinking brings minus the "beer belly".

Now, what better way for Lone Star Ultra to announce its presence than by co-presenting the biggest rock concert to hit Manila, Incubus Live in Manila slated on March 12, 2004 at the CCP Open Grounds.

Now that it seems the world of light is in the dark, why go light, when you can go Ultra?

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Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Color counts in Nine West's Spring collection /D2

A week of Martha Stewart and Tom Ford

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

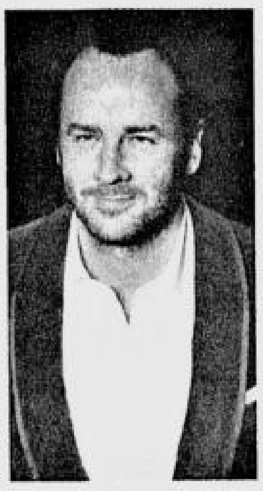
Two lifestyle icons are at the crossroads: one bound for jail, the other away from the brand he's built

THE PAST week saw two of the era's greatest lifestyle icons going through tectonic phases in their lives: one is on the brink of going to jail, the other said goodbye to the brand and fashion house he had rebuilt.

Martha Stewart. Tom Ford. (I presume you know who is who.) Frankly, watching and reading the news about the two was a healthy distraction for us from the local news on politics that simply grosses us out.

What's happening to Martha Stewart, the lifestyle guru of the times, is simply one for the books. She's been convicted on three charges arising from insider trading, is due to be sentenced in June, with each conviction carrying a maximum of five years in prison. Not only do people find it incredible that the woman, who became associated with everything homey and classy, will be behind bars, and might actually spend the very near future exploring the fine intricacies of decorating a prison ward. What they also find hard to believe is that the prosecution has even come this far.

If you read—and believe—the (unauthorized) biography of Martha Stewart, "Just Desserts" (by **Jerry Oppenheimer**), you'd know that her life and rise to the top is not exactly a plate of yummy cookies. From a poor Polish-American girl in Nutley, New Jersey, to Glamour magazine model, to Wall Street broker and Connecticut caterer and, finally, to a lifestyle icon and powerful multimedia brand, Stewart clawed her way up, and of course, left a mess here and there. There have been scores of people she stepped on, from staffers to her own kin, and the resulting composite is anything but glamorous.



TOM Ford AP

But then her character aside, nobody can dispute that Stewart helped define lifestyle the past two decades—from the joys and craft of cocooning to the elegance and romance of today's weddings. Not only did she carve an image for herself, she also built a brand that has created and sustained a multimedia empire that's listed in the New York Stock Exchange.

What's interesting to see is how her staff—her company—will veer the Martha Stewart brand away from the tainted persona that is Martha Stewart and evolve it into a stable and thriving media empire. It makes for a good lesson in branding.

Can her magazines survive the "Martha Stewart curse"?

Many believe they will. Already, her company has produced in the recent months two

A WEEK/ D4

A TOM Ford creation for Yves Saint-Laurent's Autumn/ Winter 2004-05 collection AFP

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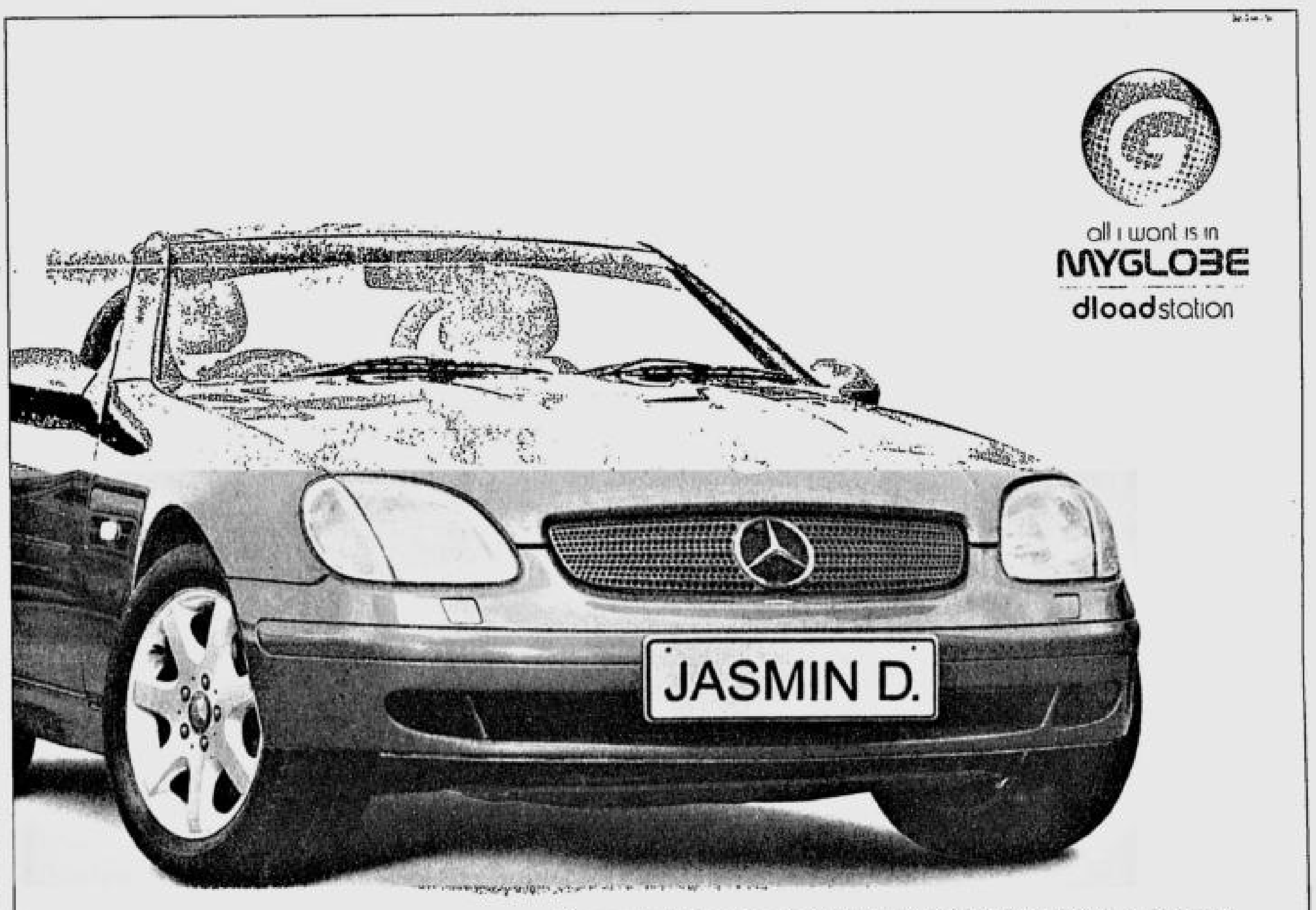

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HOTLIST

Title	Artist	Keyword
The Gift	Piolo Pascual	thegift
Biglaan	6 Cycle Mind	biglaan
Sa Iyo	Sarah geronimo	saiyo
Because of You	Keith Martin/ Kyla	becauseofu
Endless Love 2 Theme	Endless Love 2	endlesslove2
Happy	Alexia	f4happy
If You Come To Me	Atomic Kitten	ifucome2me
My Immortal	Evanescence	myimmortal
Breaking Us In Two	Mandy Moore	breakinusin2
Toxic	Britney Spears	toxic
Hey Yah	Outkast	heyyah
Baby I Love You	Jennifer Lopez	babyiloveyou
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Where Is The Love	Black Eyed Peas	werisdlove
Bakit Pa Ba?	Jay-r	bakitpaba

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*Ms. Docot opted to get cash equivalent of car prize.

MOST REQUESTED LOVESONGS

Title	Artist	Keyword
A Penny For Your Thoughts	Tavares	apenny
Overjoyed	Stevie Wonder	overjoyed
Knocks me off my feet	Stevie Wonder	knocksmeoff
Weak	SWV	weak
Fallin	Teri Desario	fallin
Fallen	Lauren Wood	fallen
Till They Take My Heart Away	Clair Marlow	tildeytake
All My Life	America	allmylife
Love Is All That Matters	Eric Carmen	loveisall
Get Here	Oleta Adams	gethere
More Than Words	Extreme	moredanwords
Friend Of Mine	Odette Quesada	friendofmine
Be My Number Two	Joe Jackson	bemyno2
Ako'y Sayo	I-Axe	akoysayo
Don't Know What To Say	Ric Segretto	dontknow

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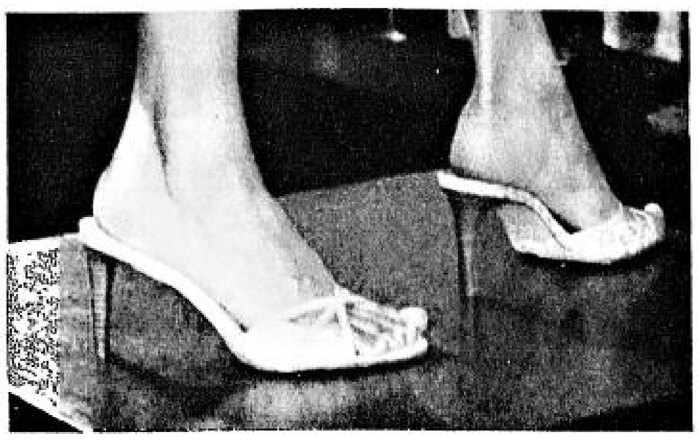
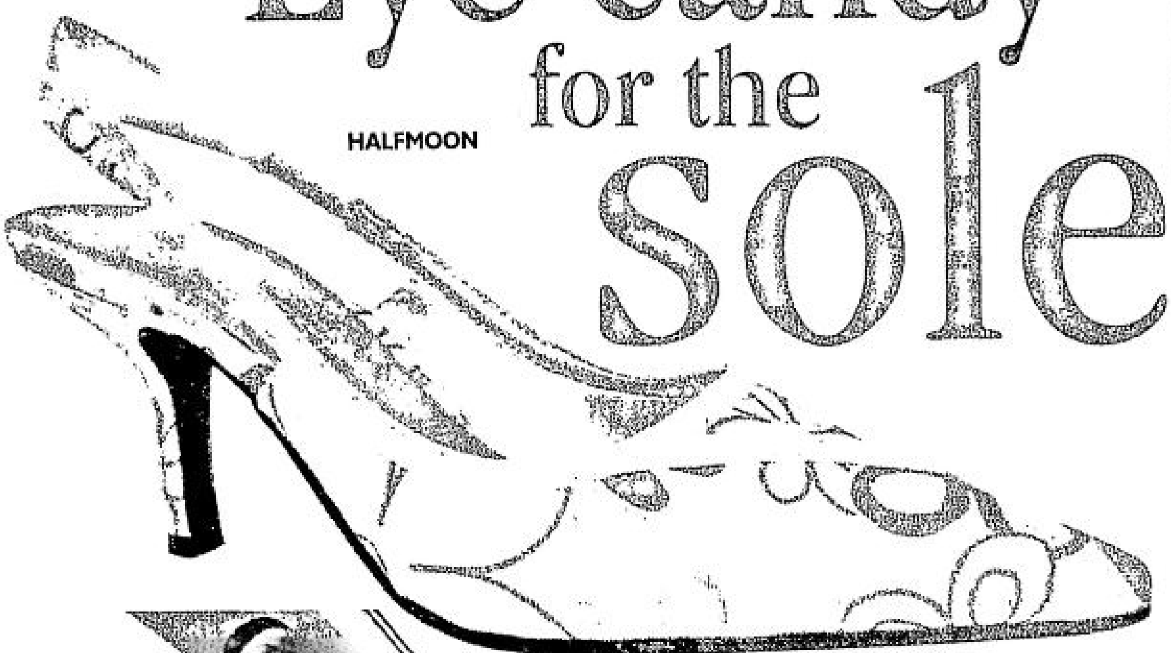
ALEM red slides with kitten heels and sporty buckles



SEXY sandals in pink, green and blue tones

MAKE a grand exit in rhinestones and red.

Eye candy for the sole



HALFMOON

HUDSON... Mesh goes dressy in turquoise

COLOR is back: this is the big news of the Spring 2004 collection of Nine West, the footwear label that was born in the United States in 1977 and has become a global brand.

A full spectrum of eye-catching, beautiful, cheery colors—orange, green, hot pink and turquoise—characterizes the collection. According to Christina Zinycz, merchandise manager of Nine West in Asia, the combination of eye candy and witty designs makes their shoes and bags much sought-after, particularly in Asia where Nine West has a niche in the mass market.

Zinycz flew into town with merchandiser Astor Chan to unveil the Spring 2004 collection Wednesday at a trunk show in Greenbelt 4, Makati.

While still maintaining a staple supply of the classic black-and-whites, Nine West's latest pumps and sandals, Halfmoon and Curtis, go for all-out color. Heel heights and toe shapes may vary, but bright hues remain the story.

There are also stripy and sexy summer sandals that add feminine appeal to the collection. And handbags in both lightweight nylon, pretty perfed materials and soft leathers show the new summer palette very well. The focus is on green, blue and pink tones.

Spring fashion also promises a full spectrum of prints and patterns: vibrant stripes, abstract and geometric prints, tropical florals and leaf patterns, and the classic Pucci look updated for the new millennium.

Bold op-art prints create drama, as in the sexy sandal Bryony. Carama and Chinve have great printed uppers in stripes and tote bags with pink and blue flowers.

Another motif is the manipulation of light. Mesh is a fresh new material for the season, whether it's a cool tailored mesh or fine nylon dressy mesh such as in the Hudson, which captures the see-through look.

As silver is a key color for the trend, some of Nine West's shoe styles such as Star, Hannes and Scarborogh feature it.

Fashion's feminine side is also highlighted with dressed-up details and styling that focus on modern interpretations of the Jackie O and Audrey Hepburn looks. The Cordless shoe follows this spirit.

Ladylike handbag shapes are featured in both classic pink and more trendy hues. There are also sporty designer-inspired bags with buckle treatments.

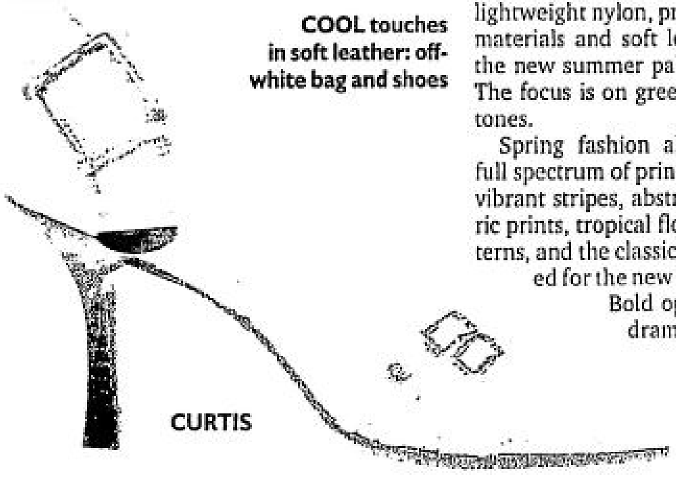
Stores Specialists, Inc. is the authorized distributor of Nine West. Its shops are located at Greenbelt 3 Mall, Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, SM Megamall, Robinson's Place Manila, Robinson's Galleria, Shangri-La Plaza, Festival SuperMall, The Power Plant Mall, Ayala Center Cebu, Rustan's Makati, Rustan's Tower, Rustan's Cubao and Rustan's Harrison Plaza.

COOL touches in soft leather: off-white bag and shoes

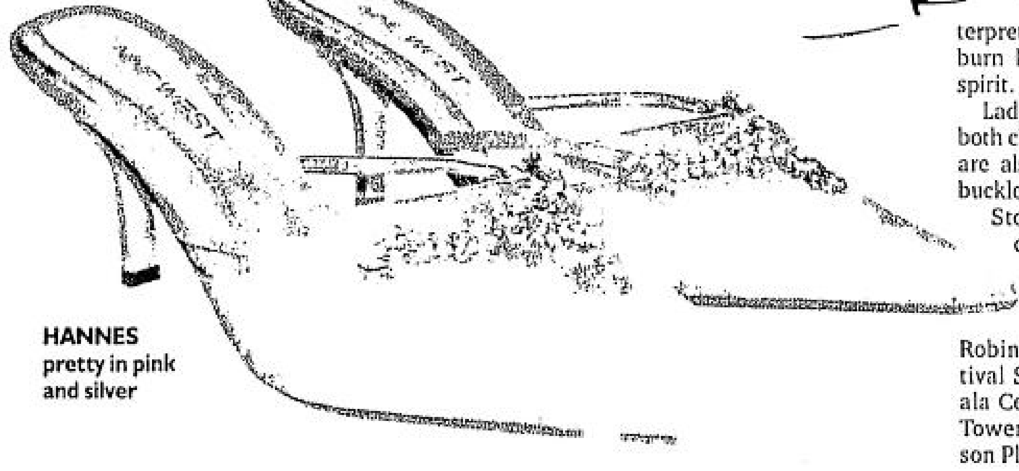
TRENDY sportswear look in white and black

ERASMO signature bags and mules

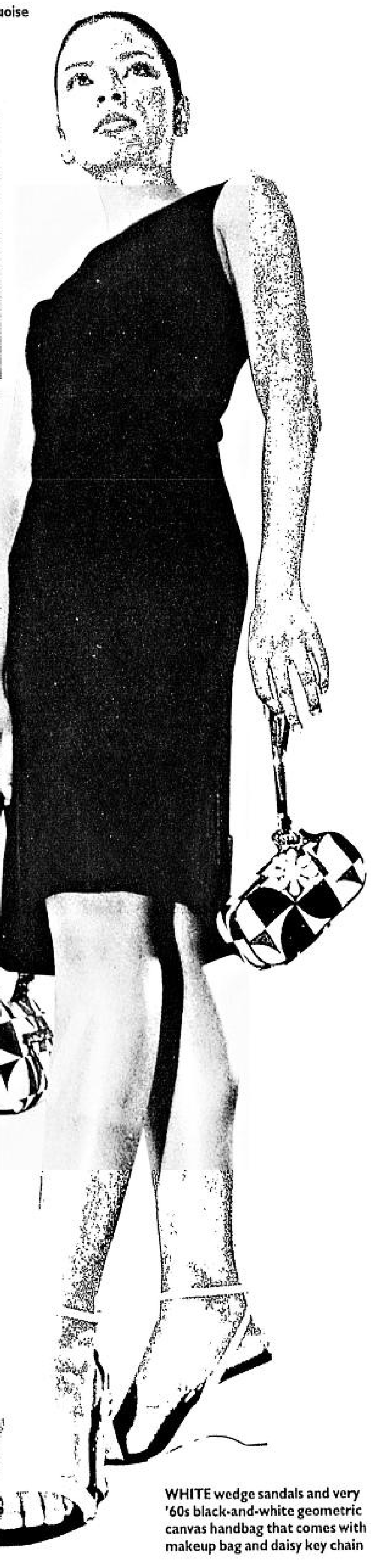
PHOTOS BY RANDY HORMILLOSA



CURTIS



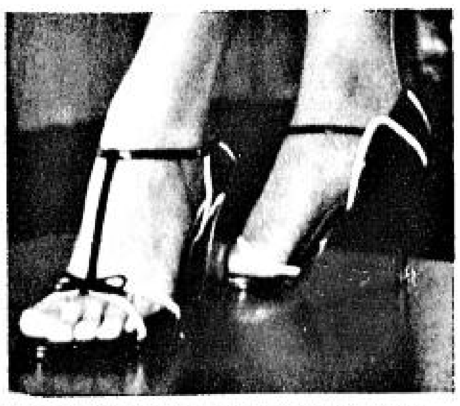
HANNES pretty in pink and silver



WHITE wedge sandals and very '60s black-and-white geometric canvas handbag that comes with makeup bag and daisy key chain

SILVER is a key color for spring.

GLIDER, silver and clear with sexy rhinestone accents



CORDLESS in contrasting pink and black

Body-scrub your way through summer

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

SUMMER means lighter makeup and more skin exposure. I don't take care of the skin on my body as much as I do my face and neck. I guess that's what most people do. Usually, I am okay with it till summer comes and clothes get smaller and more revealing.

This time, I intend to be prepared. I wasn't particularly feeling I looked my best one weekend so I decided to drop by a plush and private salon—Prive.

Being on the 29th floor in an exclusive Makati building with a lot of private rooms, I felt secure enough to have the personnel pamper my body without being seen by other customers.

So I just lay back and told them what I needed: a bikini and leg wax, whitening body scrub to even out my face and body color, and a full body massage.

This was my first bikini wax ever, and I told them I wanted Brazilian as I thought that was the best kind there was, because I kept hearing and reading about it from supermodels' interviews.

It turns out it means everything was to be taken out—as in 100-percent out and zero-leftover. Ouch!

It was a good thing Arlene was a very good waxer. Aside from being very thorough, she distracted me and amused me with anecdotes so I would relax and feel less pain.

For beginners, I would suggest the French bikini wax where they only take away from the sides and a little above. Also, when you charge for a bikini wax, trim the hairs first so it does not feel like you're in a hair-pulling match.

The rewards, though, were glorious. Now I am ready to charge to the beach with the skimpiest bikini bottom and not have any strays peeking.

My favorite was the whitening body scrub. I actually had a preview of how it must have been to be Cleopatra. Tin-tin and Erly scrubbed me down with a salt and sugar solution from the top of my neck to the soles of my feet.

They then put me in a Jacuzzi bubbling over with goat's milk and left me for 20 minutes with relaxing music. I was then laid on the table and a grey green seaweed paste was painted on me and left to dry.

Afterwards, I was led to the shower to scrub down. My skin felt so firm but soft and smooth. My knees and elbows were also visibly more even with the rest of my body.

The full-body massage with Tin-tin felt great. She used aromatherapy oils and the shiatsu technique and worked on all the knots from my shoulders, back and legs, and I had so much energy afterwards. My circulation was so revved up that my bathroom habits were regular for the next three days.

Result? A super flat stomach!

Carbo control

Cut down on carbohydrates and sugar to retain water and keep unsightly bulges down.

It is easier said than done, but I discovered that Apple Cider Vinegar Tablets helps the body in metabolizing sugar and carbohydrates.

I also noticed that ACV tabs cut down your craving for these two, so it is easier to resist temptation and follow the diet. I tried several brands, but the best I found was Dietworks' Cider Trim 100-percent apple cider vinegar (1,000 mg), available at Health Express at Glorietta 3. It costs P660 and you only take one tablet a day with your first meal.

Never take it on an empty stomach, or you'll get an awful sour feeling throughout the day. I ordered a full plate of pasta as I was once starving (first meal at 4 p.m.) and about a quarter through, I felt like gagging.

The dosage makes it easier to resist snacking and in-between meals. It has the effect of suppressing my appetite. It has also improved my bathroom habit.

Salon Prive is located at 29/F, Fraser Place, Forbes Tower, Valero St., Salcedo Village Makati City. Call 8181818.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com

> With my first bikini wax ever, I am now ready to charge to the beach in my skimpiest swimwear

BEAUTIFUL, hydrated lips

Lipcolor for instantly moisturized lips

REVLON introduces a modern moisture breakthrough: Moisturous Lipcolor.

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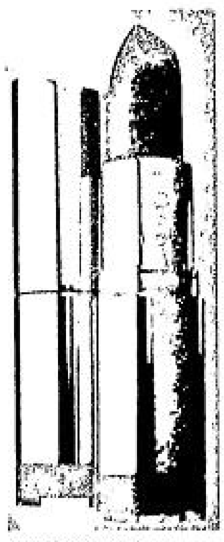
Revlon Moisturous Lipcolor features a triple-patented technology that works to ensure that lips are infused with intense hydration.

A sugar-derived "super-moisturizer" works in combination with glycerin to ensure hydration to the lips' surface, making them look fuller and plumper.

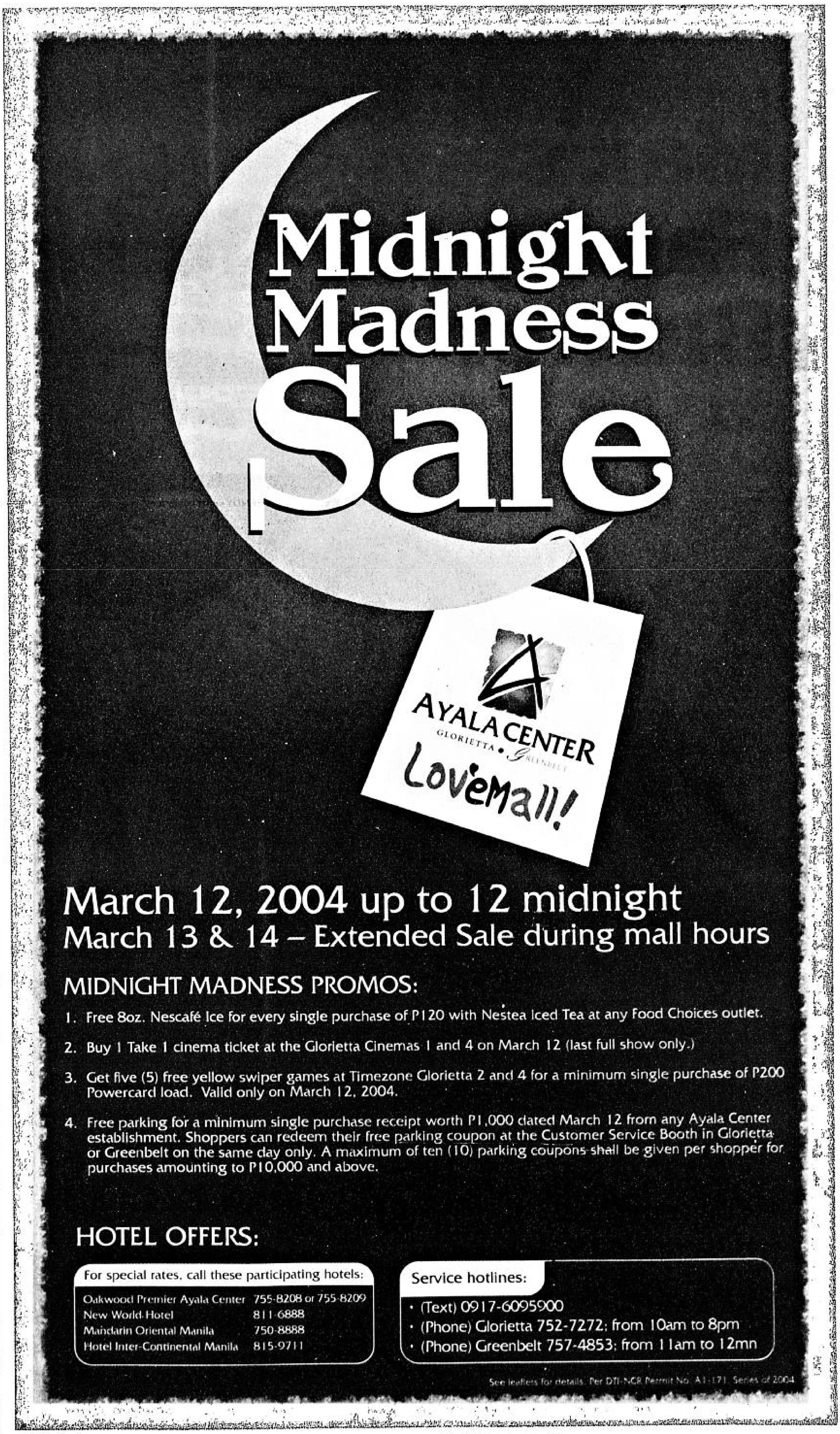
The Revlon Moisturous Lipcolor tube is as advanced as the lipcolor itself. Built into the base of the sleek, steel-like cylinder is a color chip that conveniently matches the shade pay-off. No more opening and closing of the tubes to find your perfect shade for the day. The "reflective" cap also doubles as a mirror for quick touch ups.

The product contains a botanical blend of Camelina Oil, Barbados Cherry, Passion Fruit, Mango and Papaya fruit essences. Aloe Vera and Vitamin E, as well as sun-protection SPF 17, are also present.

It is available in 24 shades: Honey Sip, Sweetwater Pink, Apricot Mist, Glistening Nude, Trickled Pink, Tangerine Burst, Naked Splash, Rosewater, Wet Wet Red, Rose Nectar, Raining Roses, Red Monsoon, Mauve So Moist, Waterlily, Liquid Garnet, Tawny Dew, Orchid Mist, Wine Splash, Cocoa Mist, Plum Wet, Rose Cascade, Chocolate Drizzle, Berry Drenched and Berry Oasis.



REVLON Moisturous Lipcolor



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4. Free parking for a minimum single purchase receipt worth P1,000 dated March 12 from any Ayala Center establishment. Shoppers can redeem their free parking coupon at the Customer Service Booth in Glorietta or Greenbelt on the same day only. A maximum of ten (10) parking coupons shall be given per shopper for purchases amounting to P10,000 and above.

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- (Phone) Glorietta 752-7272: from 10am to 8pm
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See leaflets for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A1-171. Series of 2004

The guy he loves discovers he is gay

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Tita Dulce

DEAR Tita Dulce,

Roger was a client of our office. After I took care of his order and delivery problems on the phone, he (started) sending me sweet text messages, even professing his love. Since we haven't met, I knew he mistook me for a girl. I'm gay.

As far as people in the office know, Roger is single. And he (seems to be) a nice guy. I guess I was intrigued... so I played along.

One day he asked me to dinner. I could not find an excuse so I agreed. But I got scared, so I did not show up. The next day he called and said he was sad because I stood him up. He proposed another meeting.

Each night we'd talk on the phone (for hours and) I began to fall for him. We did some "unwholesome" things over the phone and learned very private things about each other. But I never had the courage to tell him the truth.

He discovered it when he called me in the office one day. The girl who answered said I was not a "Ms" but a "Mr." Roger checked with the personnel section and got the shock of his life. He was mad. He implied that he would have accepted me for what I was if I was honest. I cried and begged him to see me, so I could meet him who brought a new meaning to my life.

He agreed but did not show up. When I called him later, he said he was there but stood at a distance, as he just wanted to see how I looked.

There had been no physical contact between us. But why do I feel like I have given him my body and my soul? And, since he left, why do I feel I will never be whole again?

JO

Yes, it would have been nice to have met him. If you had met Roger, then you would also have had a face to go with the voice.

But, really my dear, hasn't all this been just your creation? Your relationship with him grew out of deception.

Given such a foundation, your relationship would still likely end the way it did.

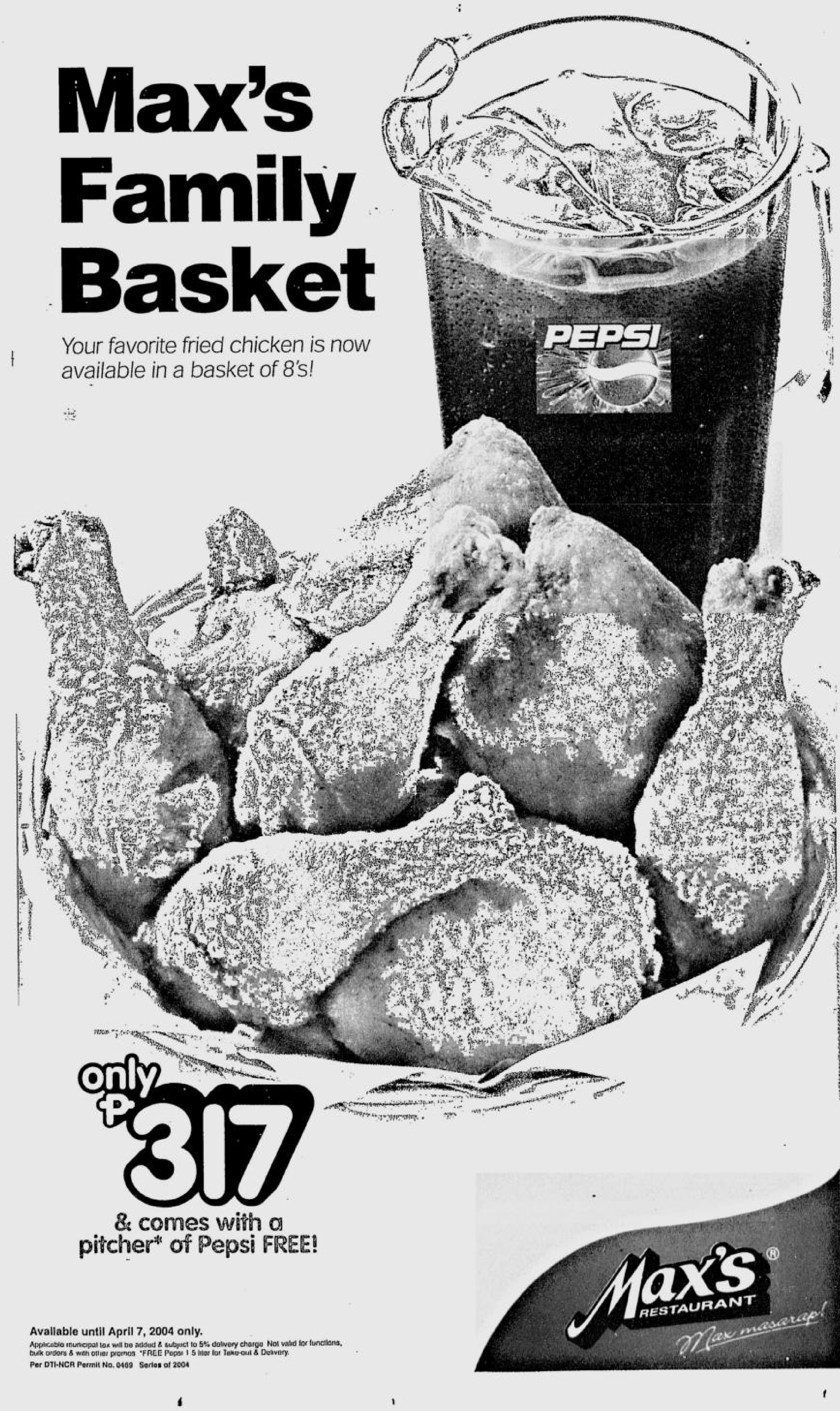
It hardly matters now whether or not you have the face to go with your memories of him. You'd still part ways, and you'd be hurt by it. The pain might even be greater, because he'd be a whole person and not just a voice so his departure from your life would be more real.

Maybe you'd be less hurt by your loss if you'd avoid romanticizing the affair. Your story somehow sounded like the movie "Sleepless in Seattle." Anyone watching that movie would keep his fingers crossed that the guy (Tom Hanks) would meet the woman (Meg Ryan) because, as every moviegoer would swear, they were just right for each other. Anyway, they indeed meet, and the movie ends happily.

But in that movie, the lead characters deserve a happy ending because they are very honest persons. I don't think you and Roger could lay claim to the same virtue. You deceived him. And since he had those "unwholesome" phone talks with you, his motives are suspect, too.

Move on, my dear. Consider this experience a lesson—not just in honesty, but also in heartache. As a self-confessed gay, you must know that the path to a serious, honest, loving, and long-lasting same-sex relationship is strewn with heartaches.

So, if you can't handle a minor setback such as this, I'm afraid you'd be in for a long miserable mile.



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0469 Series of 2004

A week of Martha . . .

From page D1

magazines that don't carry her name—"Everyday Food" and "Organizing Good Things." It's exciting to see how they'll fare in the market. Martha Stewart-watching. Love it.

Tom Ford's exclusive

Last week in Milan, Tom Ford presented his last collection for Gucci, and even as we write this, he's showing his last for Yves Saint Laurent. The fashion world stopped as the world's most successful image-maker—a designer, marketing whiz, lifestyle shaper and businessman all rolled into one—took his bow for the last time. (According to our magazine's "Mon Chef," who was in Milan that fashion week for things other than fashion, the place was actually crawling with celebs. He even ran into **Elizabeth Hurley**.) And nobody knows—not even Tom himself, he claims—when he'll design again.

His Gucci collection embodied the signature designs from the 10 years he reinvented the dying leathergoods house and turned it into a luxury fashion house that eventually went public. Ford's last Gucci show, according to Washington Post's **Robin Givhan**, was a blend of the sexual provocation Ford is known to have introduced into recent fashion and sweet nostalgia. It included his sexy white jersey gown that made a splash in 1996. This time, instead of the polished metal accent that the Gucci ad had made so popular, the fluid jersey gown had serpent head.

However, it wasn't the details of the collection that kept us engrossed, but the exclusive interview Ford granted Women's Wear Daily, the rag trade bible, as the Milan collections were going on. To our knowledge this was the first time Ford talked candidly and at length about his departure from the fashion house he and its CEO, **Dominico De Sole**, created.

By reinventing Gucci the brand 10 years ago, Ford made both fashion and business history. As a designer he didn't only contemporize the staid Gucci goods, he also brought its clothes to the cutting edge and introduced accessories such as handbags that became must-haves. As **Kate Betts** wrote in Time, Ford's real legacy was the "spending frenzy he started in the mid-'90s with his logo-laded handbags." Women now are willing to invest in a handbag more than in a dress, thanks to Ford.

All this design and marketing genius translated into bottom-line gains as Ford and De Sole turned the Gucci Group into a publicly listed firm, then thwarted the takeover attempt of **Bernard Arnault**'s LVMH (owner of Louis Vuitton, Dior, Givenchy, among others) and for that, had to cede majority to the French giant Pinault-Printemps-Redoute. It's from this alliance with PPR that Ford and De Sole broke away from—a separation that made headlines late last year.

Through WWD, Ford broke his silence and said what many suspected was the root of the fall-out all along: "Money had absolutely nothing to do with it. It was about control," Ford told WWD's **Bridget Foley**.

Ford, with De Sole, had expected to have a free hand in directing the Gucci Group and the lines it had bought (Yves Saint Laurent, Stella McCartney, among others), as was initially agreed with PPR chair **Francois Pinault**. PPR chief executive officer **Serge Weinberg**, however, apparently had a different thing in mind.

Ford told WWD: "It really was a question of control, and fortunately or unfortunately, I realized that I have nothing to learn about luxury from Serge Weinberg. I actually said this to Serge in a meeting, and I think that put the nail in the coffin."

He continued: "I think Serge does a fine job at what he does, but he has absolutely no experience in the luxury industry, in the fashion industry. But PPR paid a lot of money for Gucci. It's their company and they can run it as they choose."

Before the negotiation fell through, Ford and De Sole were looking forward to more years at Gucci, seven for Ford and two for De Sole, who was due to retire. And upon De Sole's retirement the plan was for Ford to be CEO. But all that's in the past.

Ford sounded circumspect yet forthright in the interview. While he praised his reported successors—four, all from his staff at Gucci—he also stressed that building a fashion brand entailed not a team strategy but a "single, focused point of view," not many voices but one, so the market wouldn't be confused. (His reported successors are **Alessandra Facchinetti**, **Alfreda Giannini** and **John Ray** at Gucci, and **Stefano Pilati** at YSL. **Alexander McQueen** turned down the job.)

Now, about his future: "It's so funny, people keep asking me what my future is, and they don't really believe me when I tell them that I really haven't made any decisions. My first reaction, for someone who is used to working as hard as I am, is total panic."

Ford admitted though that he's "very serious about wanting to make a movie."

A part of the interview gave us a glimpse of the kind of man Ford is, which is perhaps why his success has been distinct. Asked "How much consolation is there that you are walking away a very rich man?"

He said, "Money, believe it or not, isn't money to me. It's freedom and is, of course, a great consolation that I am able to walk away. That's one of the things I worked hard for all these years and so that is terrific."

E-mail the author at tsanjuan@skyinet.net

FESTYLE

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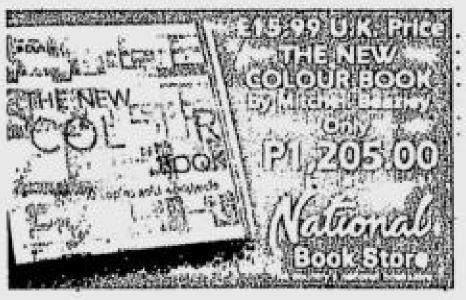
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FABRIC collection that exudes the warmth and sheen of copper and rust

Threads of texture and luxury

By Alex Y. Vergara

COCOONING has spawned a number of trends in the field of furnishing and interior design.

In Europe, for instance, there has been an increase in demand for iridescent fabrics such as taffeta. There has also been a gradual shift in demand from subdued colors such as brown and beige to warmer shades that range from copper to orange.

"Since people spend more time at home, they want to make their houses feel cozier and more comfortable," says Marcel Vinnenberg, export manager of JAB Anstoetz, a leading manufacturer of high-end home fabrics and carpets based in Bielefeld, Germany.

"Colors as well as textures play a big role in evoking certain moods," he adds.

The use of more natural fibers also imparts a luxurious feel that can never be achieved by using purely synthetic materials.

"It can be a combination of cotton, silk and linen," says Vinnenberg. "There are no limits to combining various materials and weaving techniques to achieve the desired effect."

New line

Vinnenberg was recently in Manila to introduce JAB's latest line of fabrics—from drapes and upholstery to carpets and area rugs. Skreja Philippines Inc. (tel. 2548472 or 2540607-08) has been the exclusive local distributor of JAB products for two years now.

The rich, it is said, are different from you and me. Although the company offers more affordable brands, its main market is decidedly high-end.

"Despite the tough times," says Sherwin Ang, senior vice president of Skreja, "there will always be a market for high-end products such as those offered by JAB. The extremely rich are hardly affected by any downturn in the economy."

JAB, which styles itself as the Louis Vuitton of carpets and home fabrics, is said to be a well-known brand among the country's top furniture and interior designers.

This is because a growing number of affluent families aren't content to merely buy high-end home and office furnishings. Instead, they hire professionals to design unique furniture pieces that aren't readily available in the market.

"It's no different from people who buy clothes," says Vinnenberg. "Some people prefer tailor-made clothes over the ready-made variety. Since interior design can be quite complicated, they leave everything to professionals. Every element has to work together to achieve a perfect match."

German brand JAB Anstoetz is the Louis Vuitton of carpets and home fabrics

Pricey

To give you an idea of how pricey JAB products are, such designs as the Mendro, Sintra and Silves (all grouped under the Prestige line) cost $164, $146 and $134, respectively. The unit of measurement, mind you, is in yards and not in meters.

With such a price range, it's no surprise that JAB caters to such tony clientele as the Greenbelt townhouses above Greenbelt 3, several new houses in Corinthian Gardens and the newly opened Pagcor casino in Angeles, Pampanga.

"We've seen an increase in demand in the Philippines for simple lines and Asian-inspired designs in recent years," notes Wilan Dayrit, Skreja's in-house design consultant. "There has also been a growing preference for fabrics suited for our climate, such as

THREADS/ E2

METROPOLIS STAR
ALABANG - VIADUCT

March 6
"Sensual Dancing" with
REGINE TOLENTINO
4p.m., 4th Level, Trade Hall

March 19-21
Mallwide Sale
(Friday 10a.m.-12midnight,
Sat & Sun 10a.m.-8p.m.)

March 21
Star FM Mall Concert Tour
3p.m., 4th Level, Trade Hall

March 28
"Sizzling Summer"
with AUBREY MILES
6p.m., 4th Level, Trade Hall.
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for ticket inquiries.

STARMALL
LAS PIÑAS

March 5
Bridal Fair: Free consultation from designers, photographers and coordinators, 2nd Level, Activity Hub
Free product sampling.
Demos by participating partners.

March 6
Forevermore...I do...
A bridal collection show.
Harmonic Strings performance.

March 7
Bridal Collection Show by Association of Fashion Designers of Las Piñas
Various Exhibits, Performances and Raffle Draws.

March 19-21
Mallwide Sale
(Friday 10a.m.-12midnight,
Sat & Sun 10a.m.-8p.m.)

March 28
"F" Show

STARMALL
EDSA-SHAW

March 6, 13
Stardanz (Elimination Round)
2nd Level, Trade Hall

March 7
Starmodel Quest Launch
(1st Elimination Round)
3rd Level, Foodstrip

March 14
BITUIN ESCALANTE Album Tour
3rd Level, Foodstrip

March 19
Mr. Philippines 2004
Talent Competition
3rd Level, Foodstrip

March 19-21
Mallwide Sale
(Friday 10a.m.-12midnight,
Sat & Sun 10a.m.-8p.m.)

March 21
Stardanz 2004 Grand Finals
2nd Level, Trade Hall

March 28
Starmodel Quest 2004
(2nd Elimination Round)
3rd Level, Bridgeway

March 31
MARRI NALLOS Album Tour
3rd Level, Foodstrip

Wednesdays and Fridays
Acoustic Nights at The Bridge

MSTAR
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March 28
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6 It Might Be You *Stephen Bishop* TONE MYTBU
7 Spaghetti Song *Sexbomb Dancers* TONE SPAG
8 Let Me Be The One *Mandy Moore* TONE LETMEBE
9 Something's Missing *John Mayer* TONE SMISSING
10 214 *Rivermaya* TONE 214
11 Toxic *Britney Spears* TONE TOXIC
12 Mr. Suave *Parokya Ni Edgar* TONE MRSUAVE
13 Have It All Ver. 2 *Foo Fighters* TONE HAVIT2
14 I'll Be *Edwin McCain* TONE IBE
15 Maybe *Enrique Iglesias* TONE MAYBE
16 Fallen *Sarah McLachlan* TONE FALLEN1
17 Ulan *Rivermaya* TONE ULAN
18 I Promise I Will *Stacie Orrico* TONE IPROMISE
19 The Voice Within *Christina Aguilera* TONE VOICEW
20 You Don't Know My Name *Alicia Keys* TONE YOUDONT

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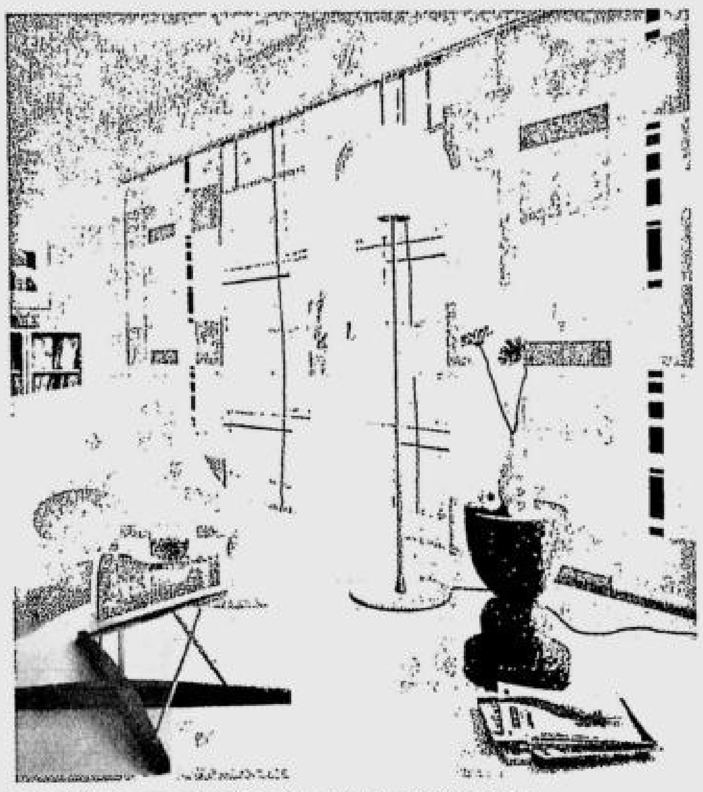


MODERN, geometric lines in neutral and acid colors

Threads of texture and luxury

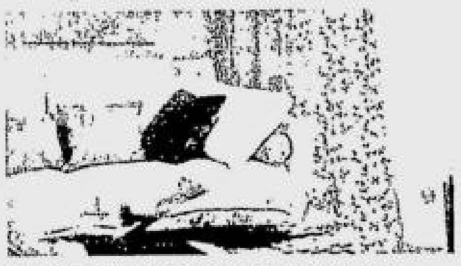
From page E1

those made from linen, cotton and silk."

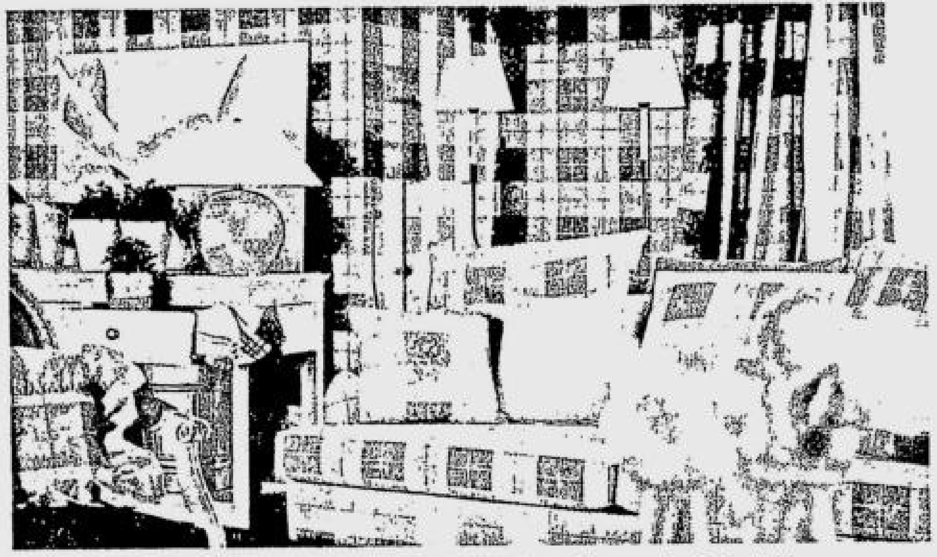
Of course, there will always be a market for the opulent look. Vinnenberg observes that, unlike Europeans, Filipinos are more inclined to prefer texture over sheen. Still, luxury in look and feel remains a paramount concern.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

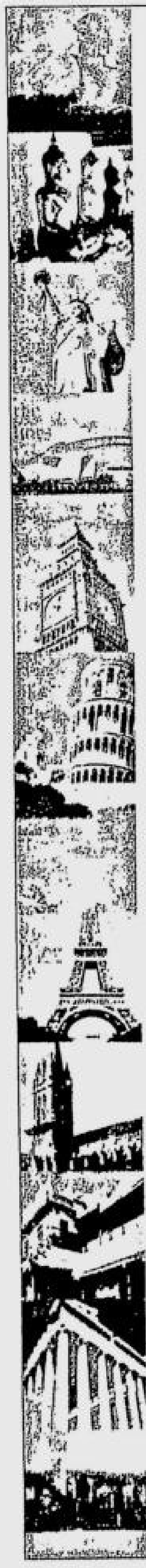
FRESH-LOOKING prints for that house in the tropics



LUSCIOUS shades make for a different summer look.



THE BLUE room, with embroidered silk and sophisticated jacquard soft furnishings



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Recycling is profitable and a money-saver

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

LINIS Ganda is the organization started in the '80s by Narda Camacho that advocates recycling as a solution to the garbage problem. In its advocacy, it is showing as well that recycling can be a money-earner.

Before the formal establishment of Linis Ganda, a movement began in certain neighborhoods in San Juan, Rizal, that encouraged segregation of different kinds of garbage—paper, kitchen refuse, bottles, metals and others.

The simple activity slowly snowballed into the movement that it is today, helping not only the environment but also many individual families who find that recycling can be a means of livelihood.

A report sent by Linis Ganda's executive office on the organization's 21st anniversary tells how the movement began. First, it conducted seminars among housewives and helpers. Soon, junk shops were set up and then, eco-aides, bodega helpers, drivers were hired.

How the system works

Junk collectors and dealers buy recyclable garbage from households and resell them to manufacturers, each dealer earning P200 a day on the average. The households, on their part, earn whatever is bought from them, according to the going rate, thus profiting from the transactions, too.

It soon became evident to Linis Ganda watchers that this beautification and cleaning project had become an underground economy of sorts. Junk dealers and households both earned as they got rid of garbage, a win-win situation for participants.

Figures from Linis Ganda reveal that in 1997, households in 17 towns and cities in Metro Manila got rid of almost 70,000 tons of paper, plastic, bottles and other forms of trash and were paid a total of over P95 million. The figures have been consistently rising since then. Last year, from a collection of about 210,000 tons of garbage, they earned P268 million.

While the organization's big beneficiaries are junk collectors and families, the environment benefits most of all, as recycling reduces what otherwise must go into dumpsites, consequently reducing pollution in the water, air and land.

A beneficial domino effect is set off because demand for water and energy needed in processing paper, plastic and other garbage materials drops. Less demand for paper, plastic, etc., saves more trees in the forests, the oil under the seas, iron ore in the mountains and sand on the beaches.

Another bonus from Linis Ganda operations is the fact that the Department of Public Works and Highways saves an average P18 million annually by not having to unclog canals and rivers of plastics and other trash.

Local governments save billions of pesos yearly by having less garbage to haul in their areas. Health care costs are also reduced because diseases from pollution are reduced.

Still waiting

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Linis Ganda has not lost hope. It knows where its job lies, and it is willing to wait for those who should be concerned to finally take action.

It's election time. Time to talk environment. But who is talking? Or even thinking?

E-mail the author at dorisnuyda@yahoo.com

BEST orchid in show: Paph. St. Swithin "Yuubun Shingaki," won by Andres Golamco Jr.

Orchid show's big winner

ANDRES Golamco Jr. received the two top prizes in the 58th Annual Orchid and Garden Show. Golamco received P10,000 cash and a trophy for his Paph. St. Swithin "Yuubun Shingaki," which was named Best Orchid in Show. His Epi. Venus Valley was first prize in the category Best Other Genera.

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Guests of honor Carmen Escobar and former Secretary of Justice Hernando Perez cut the ceremonial ribbon along with some members of the Philippine Orchid Society: Mable Chua, Remy Santileces, Rex Puentespina, C. V. Lazaro, engineer Zaldy de la Rosa, Anita Are, Mody Manglicmot. Anna Ruth Purificacion Conde, Carmen Florento, Ina Valdes, Vic Chin Jr., Nonito Dolera and Serapion S. Metilla.

Dish garden workshop for cancer patients, caregivers

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Patients and their caregivers, the institute's staff, as well as volunteer workers, attended the workshop conducted by Fernando Aurique of the Philippine National Radiation Institute. He was assisted by CV Lazaro, JM Lacandula, Lil Gatmaitan and Jean Lasap of the LBOS.

Ten best dish gardens were chosen from more than 30.

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Jean Lasap, LBOS president, and CV Lazaro coordinated the activity and arranged the plants.

The club also donates plants regularly to the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), the usual venue for its semi-annual shows.

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Magnolia
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Pure creaminess, pure pleasure.

Thames College still accepting applicants

THAMES International Business School will hold the last batch of entrance exams on March 13, 20 and 27, 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Interested applicants must submit completed forms at least five days prior to their preferred exam date. Thames is at 12 Orchard Road, Eastwood City, QC. Call 6874736/6875808.

GOINGS ON

FAMILY DAY. The Little Gym will hold its Terrific Tots Family Fun and Recognition Day at the Ayala Hall of Makati Sports Club on March 13, 8:30 a.m. TLG has branches at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong (6372463/64), Bonifacio Tech Center, Fort Bonifacio, Makati (8151735/79), Festival Supermall, Alabang (8504060/61) and Shoppesville, Katipunan Avenue, QC (9299013/18).

SEMINAR. US-based Nurse Review Center, Assessment Technologies Institute International is offering free seminars on Successful Career Advancement for all nurses—both students and professionals. The seminars will be held on March 13, 27 and April 3 at Unit 101, Jollibee Plaza, Emerald Ave., Ortigas. Call 6830312/ 16.

CONCERT. Paco Park Presents features the Oktokanto Guitar Ensemble composed of Nathan Neil Manimtim, Ferdinand Medina, Paolo Miguel Tiongson and Roberto Regachuelo Jr. The event will be held today. Admission is free.

BAZAAR. Karl Edward International kicks off Shop@the fort on March 13 and 14, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at the NBC Tent.

QUIZ SHOW. The Digital LG Challenge will be held on March 14, 9-10 a.m. on GMA. The contest will feature Paref Southridge School and Colegio de Santa Monica de Angat.

CONCERT. Concert at the Park presents the Sandiwang Kayumanggi Folk Dance Troupe of the Carlos P. Garcia High School on March, 6 p.m. Admission is free.

TRADE SHOW. The 9th Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition will be held on March 16-20. The construction and building materials will be housed at the World Trade Center while the model house, furniture, interior decor and garden will be displayed at the Philippine Trade Training Center. Admission is free.

ANNIVERSARY. Nu Skin Philippines will hold a success seminar to mark the company's sixth anniversary. The event will be held on March 18, 6 p.m. at RCBC Plaza, Makati. Call 6890333.

SEMINARS. CFS Continental Technology is offering the following seminars this March: "The Challenge of Creative Selling" and "Prospecting and Creative Approach in Marketing" (March 26, 9 a.m.-12 noon); and "Training the Trainer" (March 26-27, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Call 8697960/8232358 local 4825.

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HIBISCUS-PRINT halter bikini and boyleg bottoms by Tomato

6 things to remember when shopping for swimwear

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

SWIMSUIT season is upon us again, much to the chagrin of women of all shapes and sizes, save for the very few supermodel types that look Bo Derek "10" in practically anything. But don't despair. Swimwear hunting need not be traumatic.

By following this simple guide, you can learn how to highlight what you love about your figure and how to disguise the parts you hate. You'll also feel more confident knowing that you chose the right suit for your body type.

1 **Fit is the most important consideration.** Your clothing size will not necessarily be the same as your swimsuit size. So, it's best to focus on how the suit looks and feels on your body, not on the number on the tag.

Here are some helpful fit-tips:

Straps. Swimsuit straps should lie comfortably on your shoulders. Make sure they do not dig in. If they do, try a bigger size. If they fall off, go one size down.

When trying on the suit, move around to see if the straps stay on.

Body.

- If you opt for a one-piece, remember that the torso portion should stay perfectly flat and conform to the shape of your body and spine.
- Make sure the seams don't pucker; there should be no pulling on the busts, straps and crotch.

Bust.

- When choosing a top, lift your arms to ensure that you have enough coverage and the bra does not move up.
- Adjustable straps are best so you'll feel comfortable and secure.
- If you choose a top with underwire or built-in cups, make sure they fit as well as your bra. It should provide enough support and coverage without pressing on your breasts.

Leg openings.

- The leg opening and waistband should never pucker or dig into your skin. If it does, go a size up.
- If you need more coverage, pick another style, not a bigger size.
- Always check out your rear view to make sure you have enough coverage.
- The most flattering leg height or opening is one-inch below the top of the hipbone. Start with that and experiment with other styles.

6 THINGS/ F4

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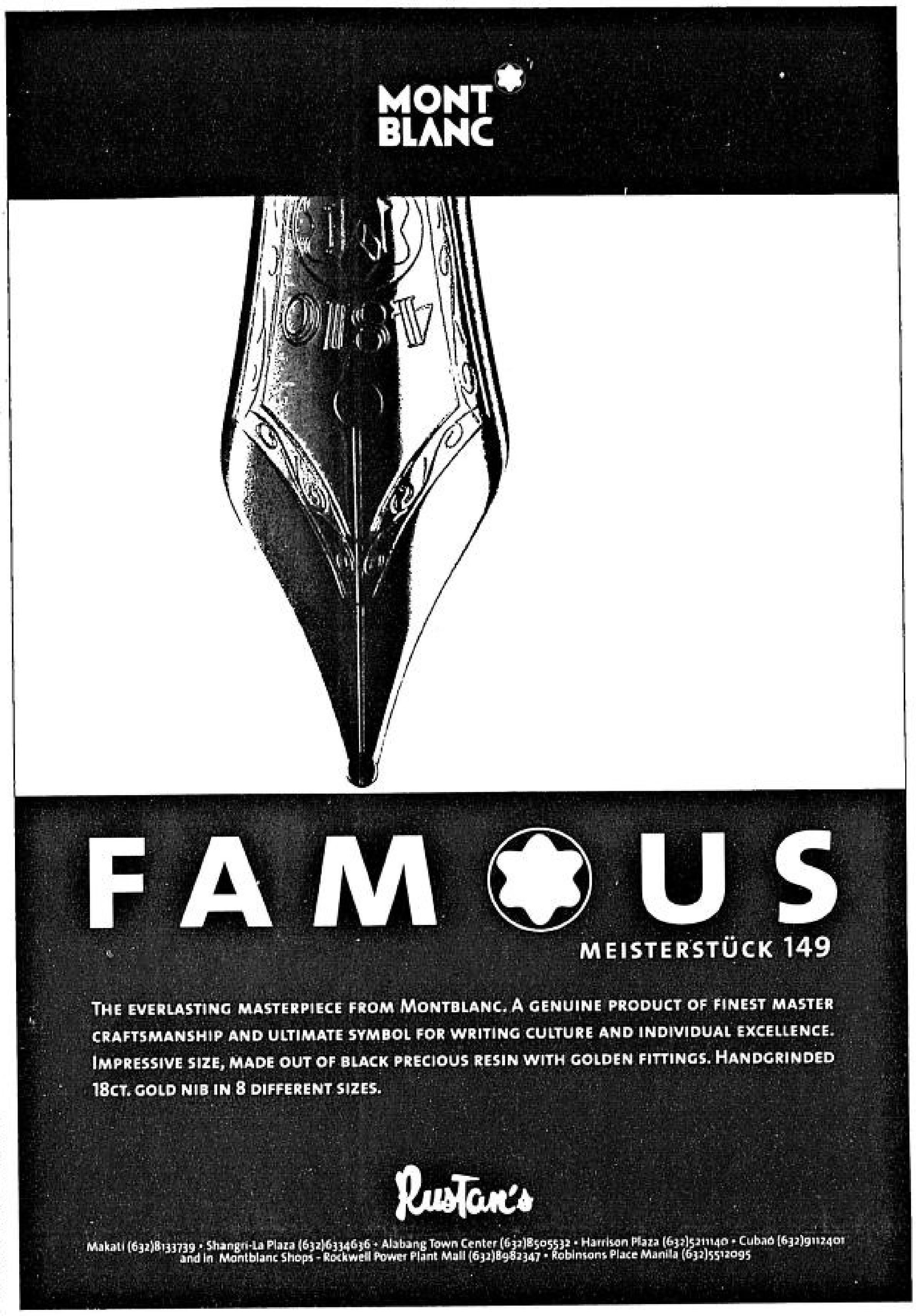
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EMBROIDERED top, skirt and monogram bag

CRUSHED taffeta dress and canvas bag

EMBROIDERED suede jacket, silk jersey top, pleated skirt and draped monogram bag

SILK twill top, cotton pants and suede monogram bag

COTTON bikini, sailor shorts and monogram bag

CASHMERE sweater, satin sailor pants and canvas bag

DRESS and rhinestone monogram bag

RTW line has glamour, drama of Hollywood spectacles

LOUIS Vuitton presents clothes that are full of glamour and drama for its Women's Spring/Summer Ready-to-Wear Collection 2004.

Inspired by Hollywood spectaculars of the 1950s, the collection revives the splendor of ancient Oriental costumes. Rough materials like gauze and linen, allowed to fray for greater realism, contrast with the luminous richness of panne velvet, lurex, silk and ostrich skin.

Gold illuminates earth tones like ochre, mustard, olive and brown, and precious-stone colors like turquoise, ruby and emerald.

Fabrics are wrapped sensually around the body. Cropped tops are draped over one shoulder, gathered under the bust, while skirts are tied like sarongs. Dresses are held in place by frames fashioned from beads or small strips of leather. Sequin strips are embroidered onto the hems and pockets of linen jackets and coats, while braid patterns appear on wide trouser legs.

Louis Vuitton revisits its favorite masculine-feminine look. For a yachting theme, long sweaters are worn over wide trousers that look like skirts and result in an ambiguous silhouette, in navy and white.

Bows adorn reefer jackets, cashmere sweaters and raw-edged cotton shorts. Oversized sailor pants have a button flap front and lace-up at the back and are available in plain cotton and satin.

For a lingerie look, men's pajamas come in a short, sexy version like a new-style evening suit. Lace monogram peeps through a baby doll wrap-over top in Japanese polyester that rustles like glossy paper, or is used as frill on a girdle showing underneath shorts.

Bras are inspired by Brazilian carnival costumes. Tulle is embroidered with silver or tortoiseshell sequins reminiscent of the bead-fringed belts and gold-studded paisleys.

The stars of the show remain the Louis Vuitton bags. To celebrate its 150th anniversary, Vuitton pays tribute to its history. The "Express" bag revisits the Trianon canvas created in 1854. It is trimmed with dyed ostrich skin used for the early trunks and uses its leather label as logo. All come in LV shapes.

For evening, materials and decoration take on a jeweled look. The "Bundle" bag in reversed goatskin is adorned with paste monogram motifs and sports a "padlock" handle that matches the real turquoise clasp. Ostrich-skin bags echo the flounces of the catwalk while clutch bags have a doeskin drape.

Finishing the look are Roman sandals in doe skin or ostrich with the colors of the collection (amethyst, yellow, silver, green, pink and turquoise).

Nametags bear the Louis Vuitton name, each "I" dotted with a paste gem. Familiar LV charms dangle from asymmetrical hoop earrings.

Louis Vuitton is located on the G/F of Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Visit the website www.vuitton.com or call 8130637.

CASHMERE and linen sweater, cotton blouse, cotton scarf, sailor pants and canvas bag

SILK Cocoon white silk mini dress with empire waist and eyelet detail

LACE-UP pale gold satin top with *piña* silk trim and matching *piña* silk wrap skirt with hanging floral/vine embroidery

Silk mini reinventions for summer

SILK Cocoon designer Katrina Goulbourn uses the house's own handwoven silks to update the mini.

"Women, whether they are in their 20s or 40s, want to look and feel young and sexy. The mini has answered that call," Goulbourn explains. "The mini is also the perfect option for our tropical heat, and I wanted to bring sophistication and glamour to it, be it for a formal cocktail or for a night on the beach."

The collection includes a dress in turquoise blue made of pine silk with a hanging embroidery detail of flowers and vines; a pale gold satin lace-up top with a wrap embroidered skirt; a tailored ballerina-inspired fitted sheer silk jacket and a tulle mini; and white-hot silk mini dress inspired by a Moroccan tunic.

Besides the mini look, Silk Cocoon also offers a whole array of handwoven silk shawls exclusive to the line, which complement any wardrobe.

Silk Cocoon is located at the New World Renaissance Hotel Shopping Arcade in Makati, across Greenbelt 3. Call 8116856.

HANDWOVEN silk jacket with tulle tie and ballerina skirt

FENDI Mini Mamma Baguette Zucchino bag, Sporty Zucchino bag, small Zucchino shopping bag, Similar Mamma Baguette Zucchino bag

Circles inspire new leather line

RUSTAN'S Department Store unveils the summer collection of luxury goods leader Fendi, which is both innovative and sophisticated.

It was inspired by the rhythmic fluidity of circles and features unexpected details.

In Fendi's latest handbag collection, round, circular detailing is executed in creative designs and combined with the best Italian craftsmanship.

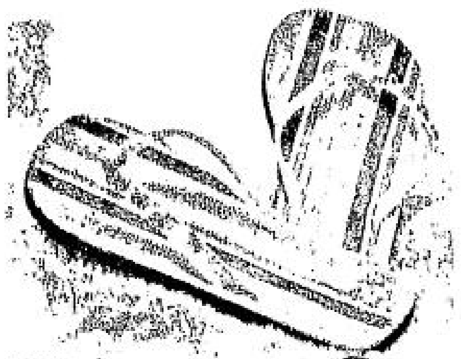
A standout is the Shadow Bag with the chic shape of a semicircle. It has the subtlest pattern of the famous double F logo in sturdy leather or classic canvas. Another variation is a mock-pony skin, with texture akin to delicate fur.

Fendi is available exclusively in Rustan's Department Store.

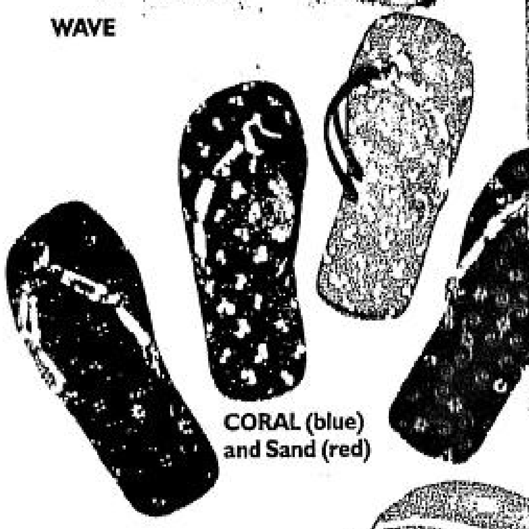
ZUCCHINO Ladies Sabot shoes

ZUCCA slingback sandals

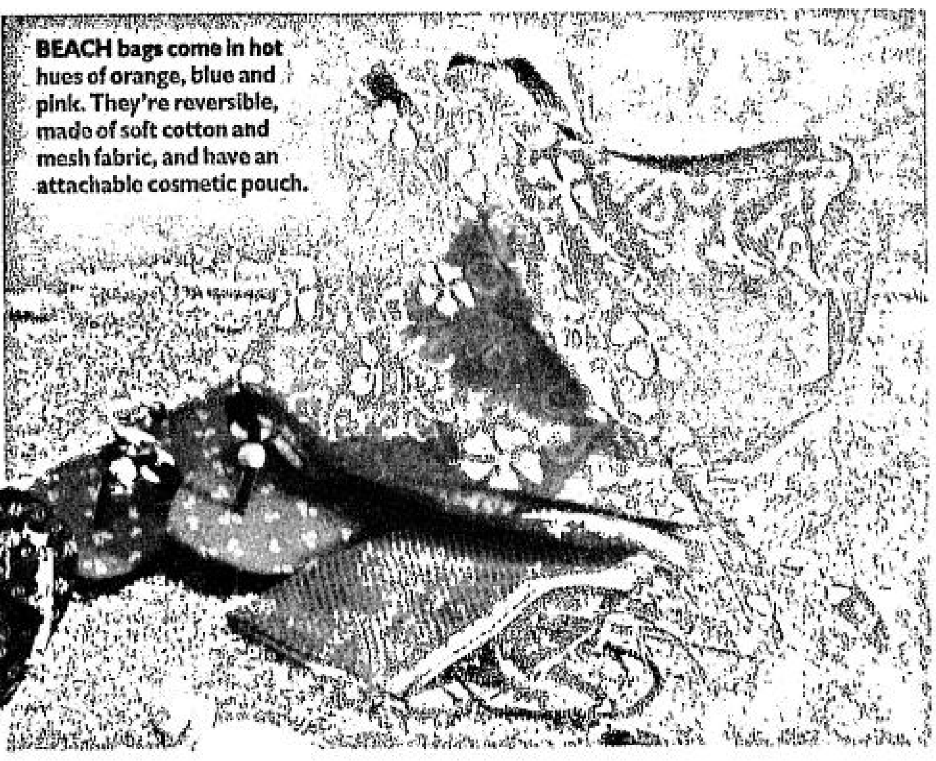
BIG and small Tiger hobo bag, and big Tiger shopping bag



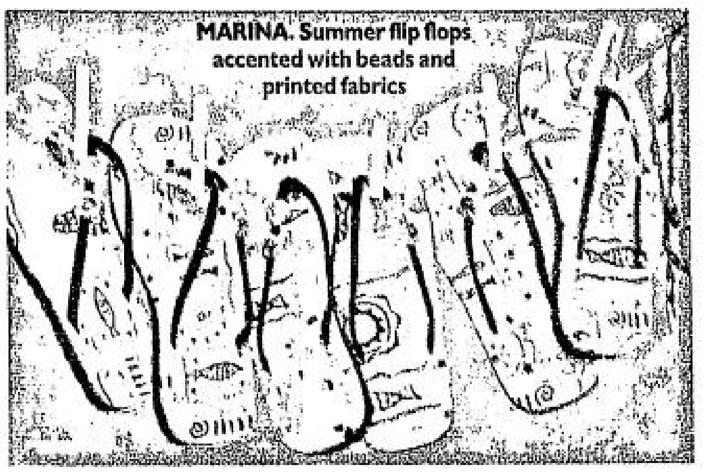
WAVE



CORAL (blue) and Sand (red)



BEACH bags come in hot hues of orange, blue and pink. They're reversible, made of soft cotton and mesh fabric, and have an attachable cosmetic pouch.



MARINA. Summer flip flops accented with beads and printed fabrics

New sunny fashion label for sun season

REVERSIBLE summer tote bag (one side plain, one side striped) comes in pink, blue, orange and green.

THE NEW fashion brand Tomato has just opened its flagship store at SM Manila.

Tomato has sexy swimwear for summer, such as a hot two-piece surf-chic bikini and a three-piece bandeau bikini.

Tomato also offers summer accessories such as floral reversible hats, summer shades and beach bags.

Get more summer picks at Tomato at SM Manila and at Lapagayo shops at Rockwell Power Plant, Glorietta 3 and Robinsons Ermita.

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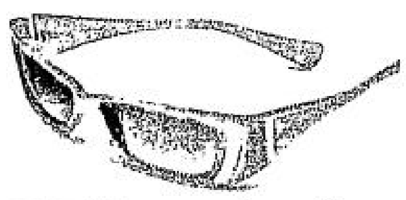
Glamorous and fun shades

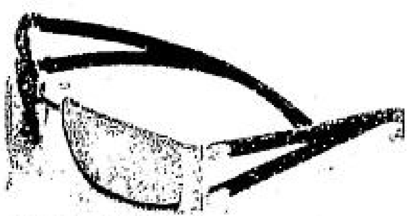
THE MISS Sixty Glasses collection by Marcolin combines glamour and a touch of fun.

Nearly all models feature particularly close-fitting and rounded lenses.

They combine classic features from previous decades enhanced by more contemporary even, futuristic, details and made with the latest technology.



COLORFUL sports sunglasses with futuristic lines are made special by contrasting hues.



WITH LARGE surround lenses, these shades have the "biker chick" look.

Mall launches activities in March

THE ROBINSONS Malls features various activities this month.

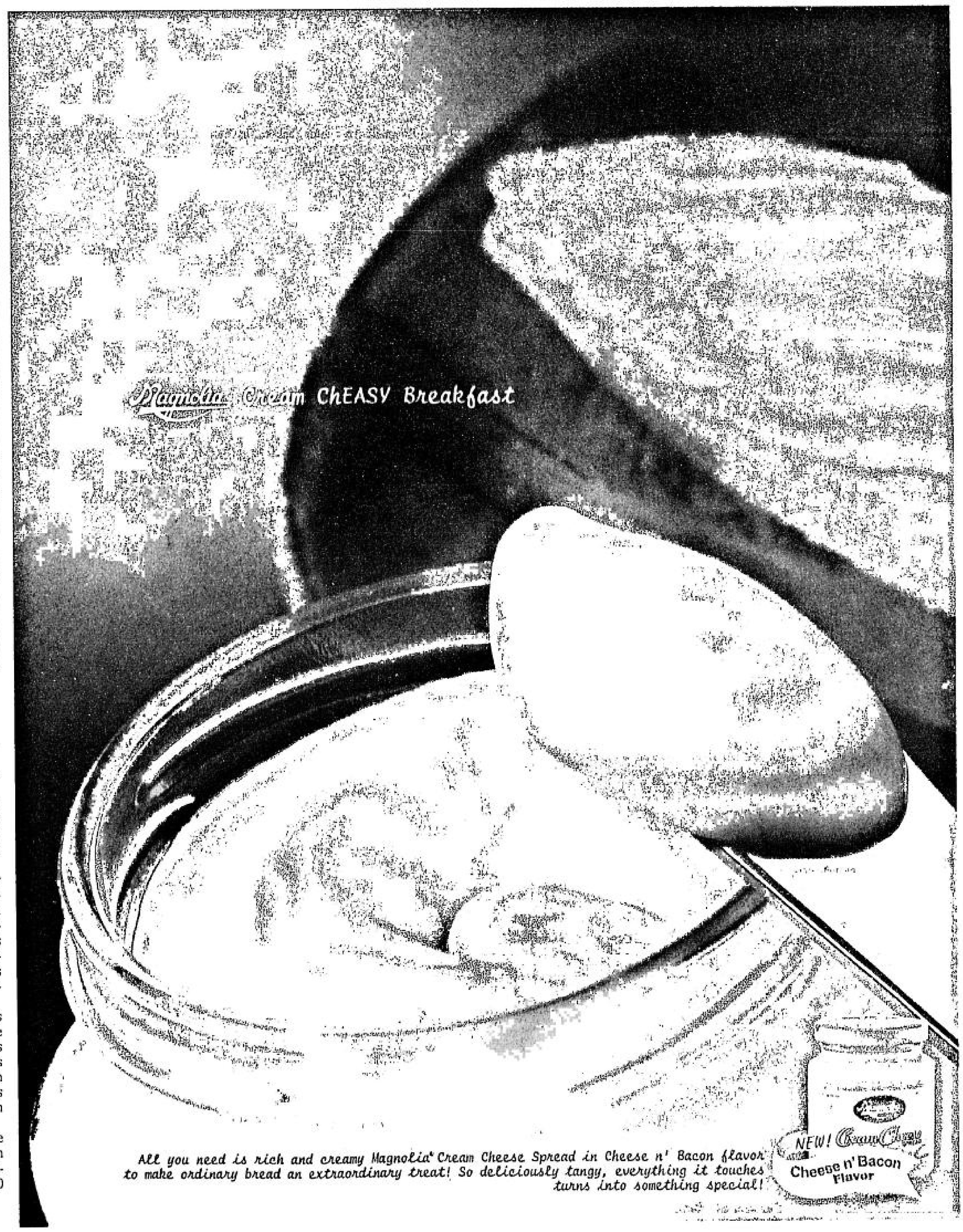
Together with Real Living, Robinsons presents a series of workshops on Home Security, Food and Entertainment, Home Care and Summer Style Decorating at 1/L, East Wing, Robinsons Galleria, 1-5 p.m.

Tomorrow, Rudolf Ranada of Dream Bar will talk about how to prepare for a small party. Denise Lopez of Dust Mite Detective Inc. will conduct a workshop on general housekeeping techniques on March 27. The series will end on April 3 with Summer Style Decorating, which will be handled by Karen Rodas of Wind and Water and Gwyn Guanzon of Real Living.

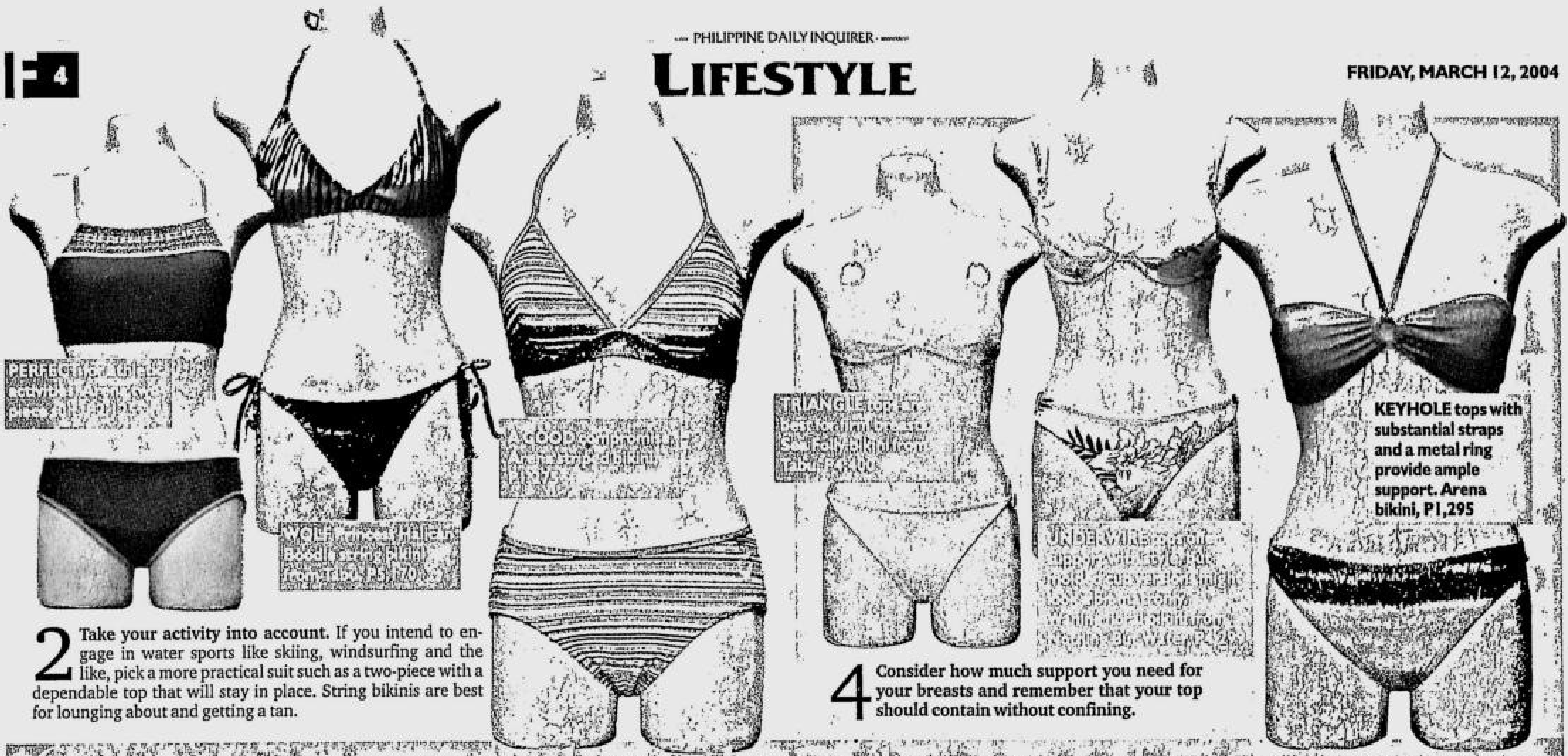
Meanwhile, the search for Miss Robinsons Batch 2 will be launched on March 13. Twelve aspirants will be chosen out of the hundreds who are invited to fill in application forms available in Robinsons Mall information counter. Deadline for submission of entries will be on April 23, while screening will be on April 29 at Holiday Inn Galleria Manila.

A mallwide sale and raffle promo will be held on March 19-21. Shoppers can also win Panasonic compact disc players. They can also get two extra raffle coupons for every P300 by using their UnionBank Visa card.

Call 6327672 or 6875681.



All you need is rich and creamy Magnolia® Cream Cheese Spread in Cheese n' Bacon flavor to make ordinary bread an extraordinary treat! So deliciously tangy, everything it touches turns into something special!



PERFECT [illegible]

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A GOOD [illegible]

TRIANGLE [illegible]

UNDERWIRE [illegible]

KEYHOLE tops with substantial straps and a metal ring provide ample support. Arena bikini, P1,295

2 **Take your activity into account.** If you intend to engage in water sports like skiing, windsurfing and the like, pick a more practical suit such as a two-piece with a dependable top that will stay in place. String bikinis are best for lounging about and getting a tan.

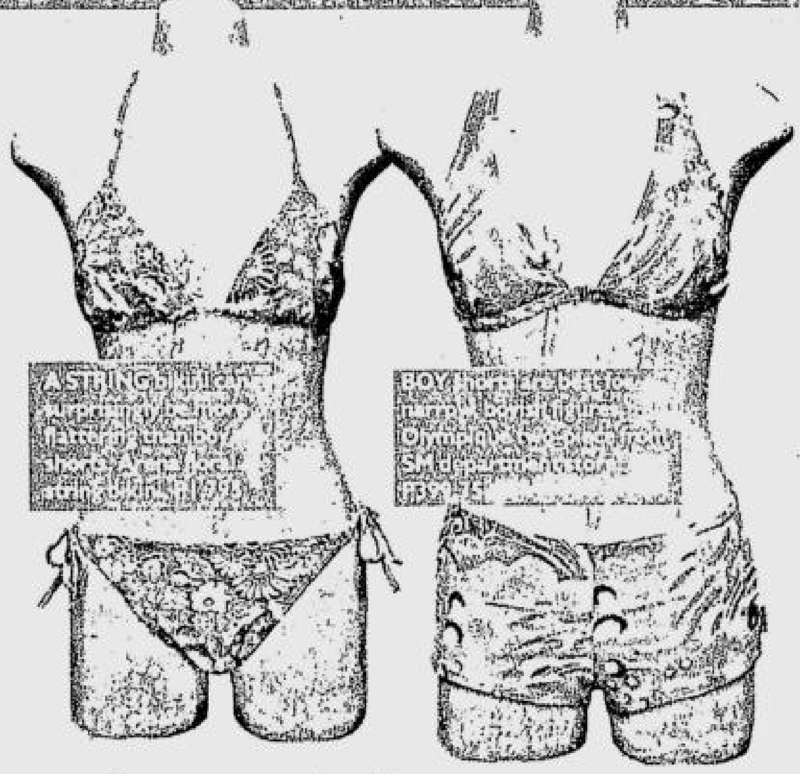
4 **Consider how much support you need for your breasts and remember that your top should contain without confining.**

6 things to remember when shopping for swimwear

From page F1

3 **As much as you dread it, try on styles you think you can never wear.** Often times, more conservative two-piece suits like tankinis are better than one-piece suits simply because a two-piece can break up a solid mass of color. String bikinis might surprisingly look good on you, as well. These skimpy numbers may seem unforgiving but because it's adjustable, the suit will not dig into your skin. Or try suits with prints, patterns, color blocking and details like shirring or a belt so you can find ways to draw attention to your assets and disguise your flaws.

> The best swimsuit is one that shows off your best assets and disguises your flaws



A STRING [illegible]

BOY [illegible]

5 **Although boy shorts provide ample coverage and look easier to wear, they are not the most flattering bottoms.** They can make your hips and butt look bigger and your limbs shorter, as they cut your legs straight across. They are best for those with narrow, boyish figures.

6 **It's time to experiment with colors.** There's no need to stick with basic but slimming black. Consider your skin tone and choose hues that will complement it. Keep in mind that yellow skin tones, which most Asians have, will look best with warm tones like brown, tan, cream and sunshiny versions of other colors. Pinkish undertones, on the other hand, are well set-off by cooler shades like ice blue, pink, lavender and the like. You can also use colors to improve your proportions by using dark hues on areas you would like to minimize and bright colors on areas you would like to emphasize.

(Next week, swimsuits for different body types.)

Sources: "The Lucky Shopping Manual," by Kim France and Andrea Linett; "In Style Secrets of Style," by the editors of In Style

E-mail the author at apsadvice@hotmail.com

Only a few will truly feel this Season of Love.

LPHI responds to customer enthusiasm

Promo extended until March 31, 2004

LPHI gifts select group

Laguna Properties Holdings, Inc. invites you to be part of a select circle who can qualify to receive precious gifts.

Buyers of a house and lot at Santarosa Estates or St. Alexandra Estates will be gifted with a Cartier Tank Francaise or Santos de Cartier ladies watch (valued at P 170,000), or free membership at the Capitol Hills Golf Club (valued at P 180,000).

Similarly, buyers in Hacienda Sta. Monica will be the recipient of a membership at the 72-hole Eagle Ridge Golf Club, the largest in the Philippines (valued at P 450,000).

See posters and flyers for details.

Santarosa Estates

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Our four letters make a home
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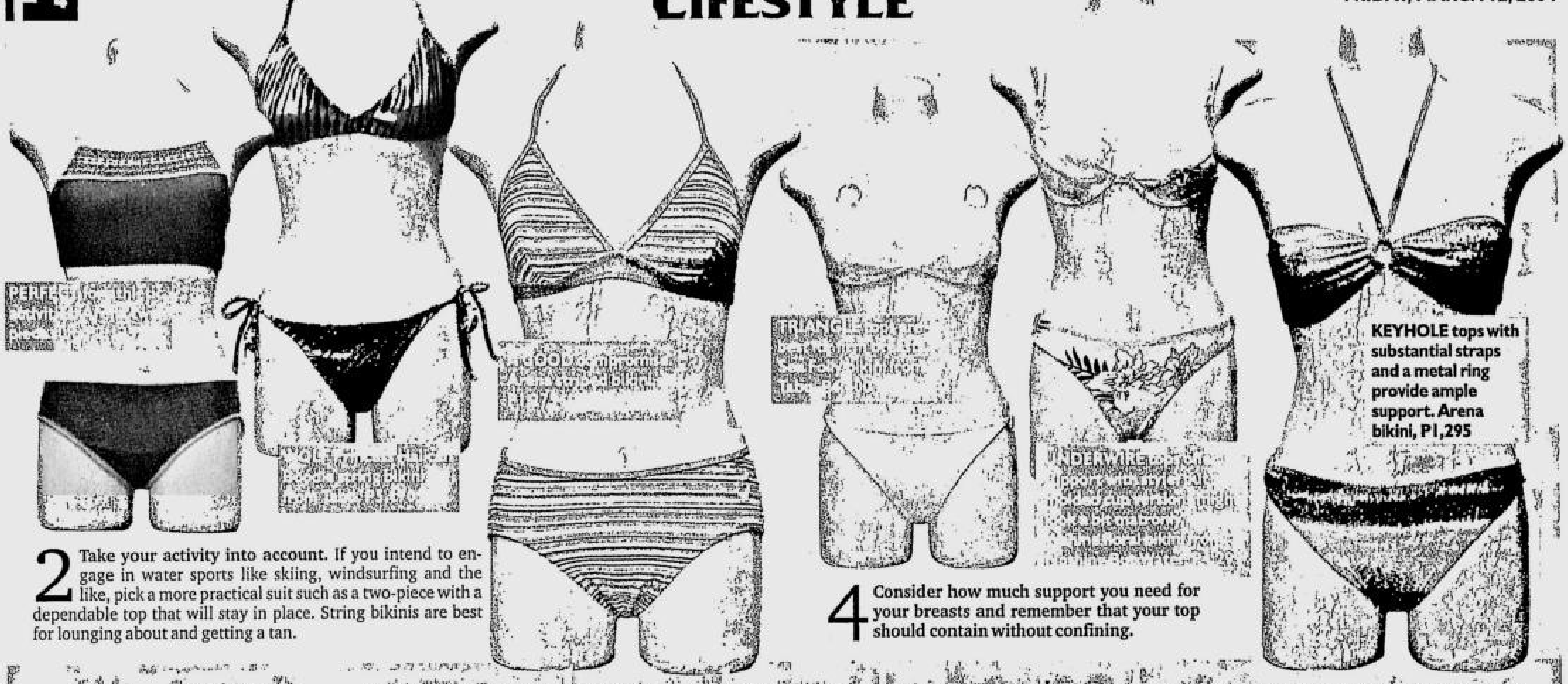
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-114 Series of 2004



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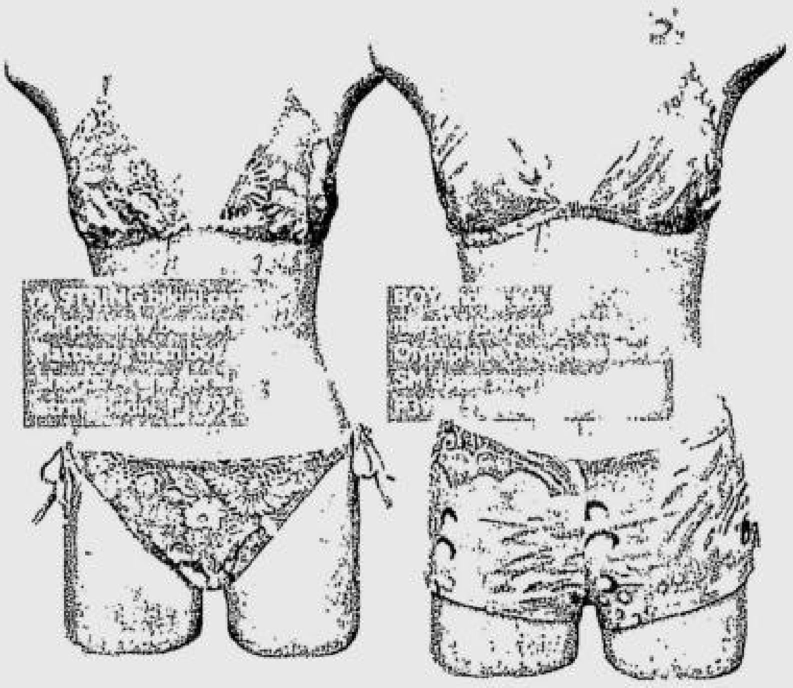

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Loveseats to delight the eyes

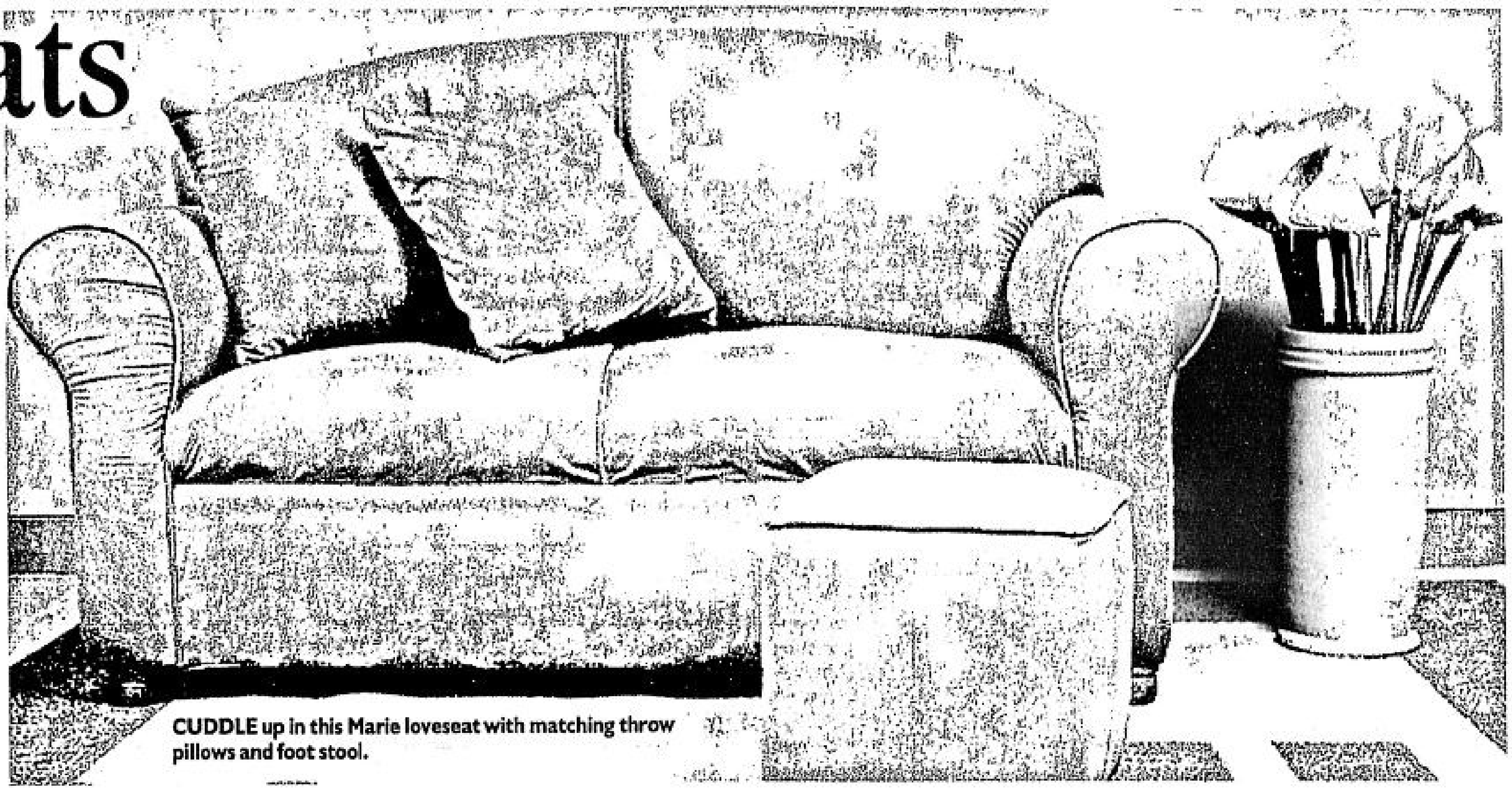
SM Homeworld unveils its new loveseat collection in eye candy colors—saffron, apple green, and red—or upholstered cushions in contemporary prints.

Now a common piece of furniture, the loveseat originated in the 17th century and was originally designed to accommodate the voluminous skirts worn by women at the time. Later, the sofas became popular with courting couples because of their unique size.

Loveseats were modified in the 18th century to become the sleek S-shape allowing couples to sit closely but separated by the backrest.

The loveseat's contemporary compact size and clever designs have now made it a favorite among condominium and townhouse dwellers.

Loveseats are available at the Homeworld Department of all SM stores.


CUDDLE up in this Marie loveseat with matching throw pillows and foot stool.

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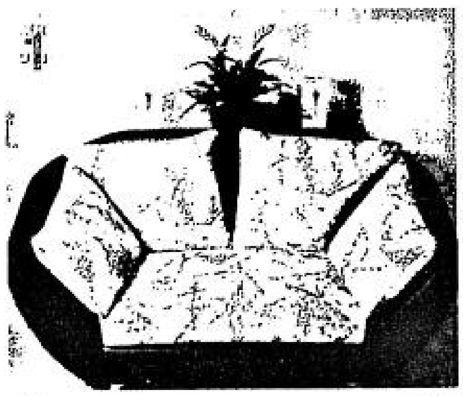
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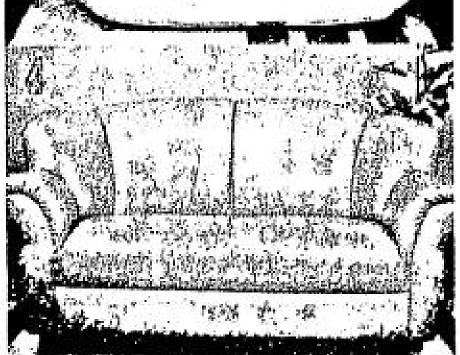
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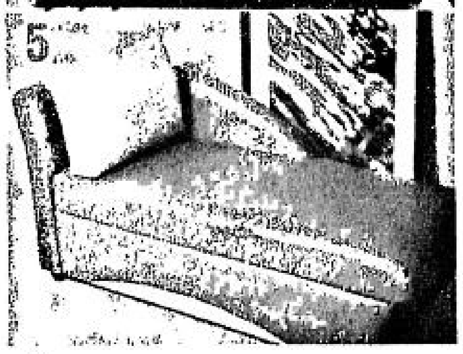
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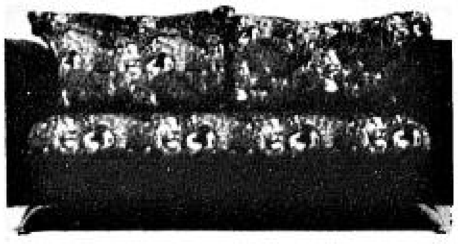
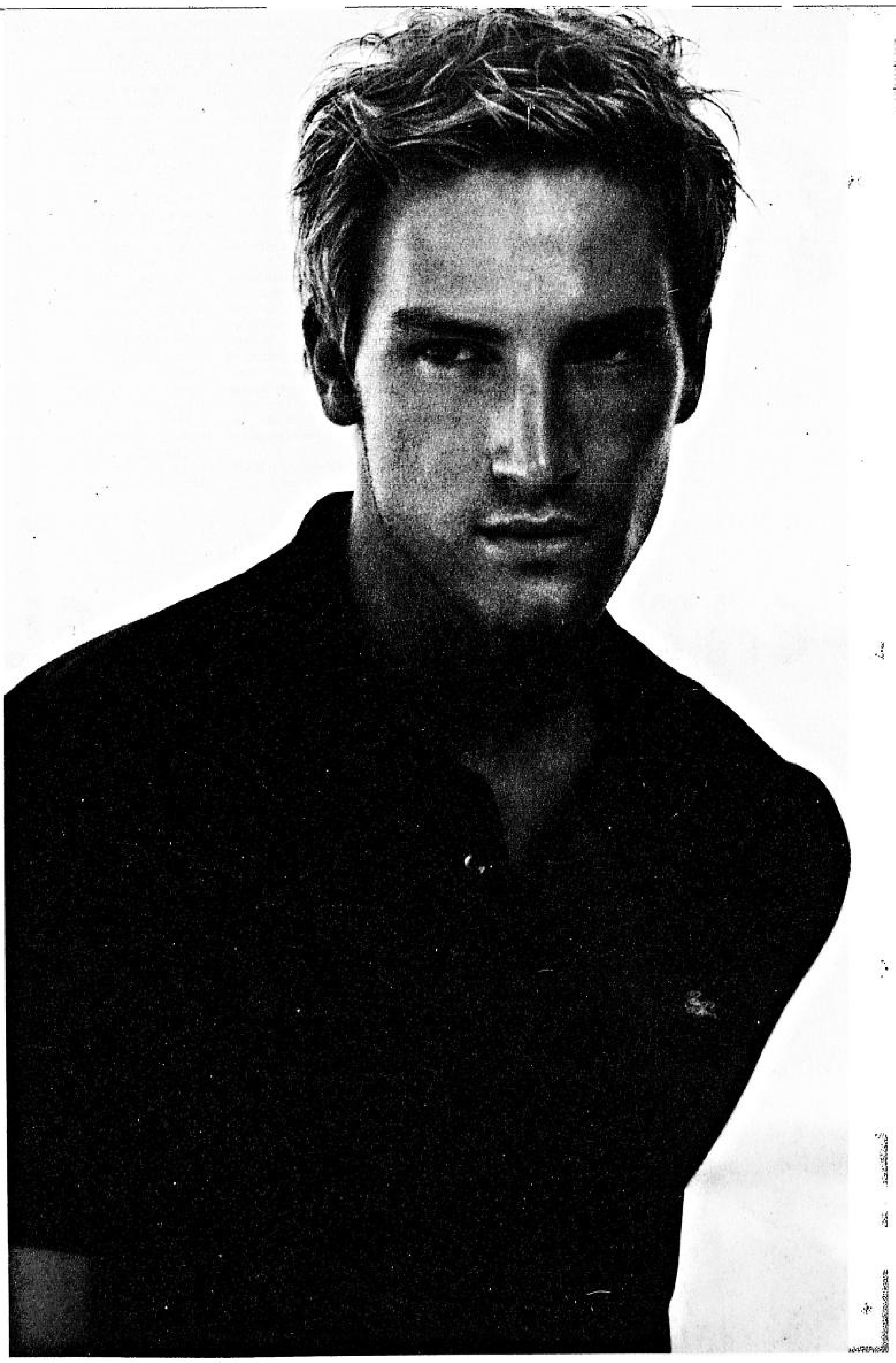


1. COZY Marcella loveseat accented with foliage-designed accent
2. Two-gether! Maroon two-seater Sandy sofa
3. Modern and minimalist Shane loveseat
4. Orange Saffron loveseat
5. Bright and contemporary Shane loveseat
6. Albert loveseat with safari-inspired prints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CORTE DE LAS PALMAS (ALABANG TOWN CENTER) · GREENBELT 3 · ROBINSONS GALLERIA · ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA
SM MEGAMALL, BLDG. B · THE POWER PLANT (ROCKWELL CENTER) · THE STORE (GRAND BOULEVARD HOTEL)

GUCCI FOLLOWERS. Concert queen Pops Fernandez and movie star Diether Ocampo

BEAUTIFUL SISTERS. Audrey Pucket-Chiu, jetting in from Hong Kong, and sister Reina Pucket-Tan

RUSTAN'S and Charriol's royals. Well-loved Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco Sr. with international socialite, Switzerland-based chick Annick Charriol

WOMEN behind the Ayala throne. Kit Silverio Zobel and Bea Miranda Zobel

JUN and Nancy Tambunting

LOUIE Vuitton's hotshot woman, Gigi Mabanta, and Stores Specialists Inc.'s main man, brilliant Anton Huang

NBC'S cool couple Maryanne Ojeda and husband Francis Lumen

SUPER PALS. Burberry gal Sigalit Djemal and Carla Reyes Tengco

TRAFFIC STOPPERS. Tessa Prieto Valdes and Borgy Manotoc

Soaring unveiling of luxur

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

COSMO Manille had a super-fantastic night, with the whopper of an opening of Greenbelt 4, which houses only the best and the finest luxury labels, *palanggas*. For the launching, Ayala Land's rah-rah gang of **Rowena Tomeldan, Winnie Nazareth, Myrna Fernandez, Cristy Comia** and **Cathy Bengzon** enlisted the country's top social and lifestyle barometers—Philippine Tatler's brilliant managing director, **Irene Martel-Francisco**, and its talented editor in chief, **Anton San Diego**. Tatler has had this history of fabulous and well-attended soirees and black-tie affairs, and the team of Martel-Francisco and San Diego guaranteed that Greenbelt 4's super unveiling would be a soaring success and the toast of the town! And let me tell you, *palanggas*: it was!

This event, which rounded up more than 250 of Manille's chi-chi set, began with the fab ceremonial ribbon-snipping. But this was different: each boutique had a ceremonial ribbon-cutting at the same time, led by an illustrious list of persons: Ayala's **Jaime Zobel**, Rustan's **Zenaida "Nedy" Tantoco** and **Margarita Delgado** performed the ceremony at Tod's; **Bea Miranda Zobel**, and **Anton** and **Nina Huang** at Botega Veneta; Martel-Francisco and **Mons Romulo Tantoco** at Coach; *tres-tres charmante* French Ambassador **Renée Veyret**, glam gal **Mandy Santos** and "It boy" **Borgy Manotoc** at Yves Saint Laurent; and Ambassador **Bienvenido Tantoco Sr.** and fashion plate **Sigalit Djemal** at Burberry.

Broadcast journalist **Ces Drilon** and **Mario Katigbak** welcomed everyone at Bulgari, natch. **Kit Zobel** and vivacious **Gigi Mabanta** also welcomed everyone at Louis Vuitton.

Jetting in from Hong Kong, especially for the event, was gorgeous **Audrey Pucket Chiu**, who looked absolutely delicious in a cool, flowing Salvatore Ferragamo dress. Ferragamo's own, tall and dashing, **Raymond de Malherbe**, presided over the unveiling of the Italian brand's boutique.

The adorably chic **Annick Charriol** made her entrance at the Charriol boutique, beside eligible bachelor **Mike Huang**.

Doing the ribbon-cutting at Prada were Italian Ambassador **Umberto Colesanti**; his wife, *la simpatica* **Clara Colesanti**; and **Bianca Zobel**, who looked like a jewel.

At Gucci, it was the hot trio of **Fernando Zobel de Ayala**, snazzy **Pops Fernandez** and wow boy **Diether Ocampo**.

After the ceremony, there was an enchanting concert at Greenbelt's immaculately landscaped pocket-garden, surrounded by baby bamboo trees and illuminated with Tivoli lights made to resemble twinkling stars.

The garden and the setting was like entering into a fairy's garden, decked with tons of *sampaguitas* and gorgeous red tea roses, all arranged by Mabolo Flowers.

Singer **Lani Misalucha**'s vocal pyrotechnics gave everyone the goosebumps. She was accompanied by the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Maestro **Ruggero Barbieri**.

Lani was stunning in a flaming-red **Inno Sotto** gown. She sang four breathtaking songs, but upon the request of the well-heeled crowd, she did an encore and sang *a capella* "Time To Say Goodbye," popularized by **Andrea Bocelli** and **Sarah Brightman**.

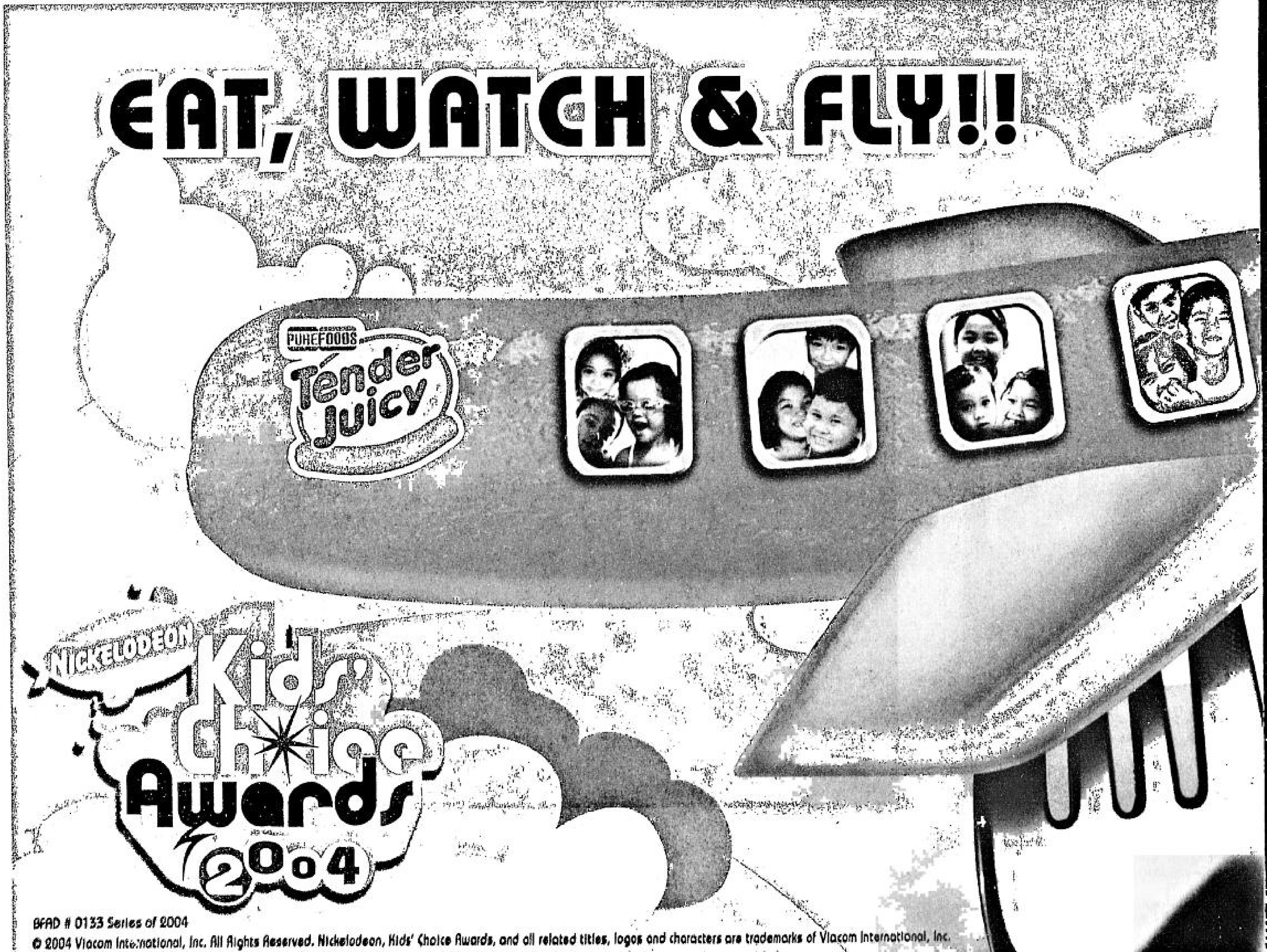
While enjoying the "Concert Under the Stars," guests were treated to an endless flow of Moet and Chandon champagne and wine from Hunter Valley Wine Society of the Philippines, no less.

Strawberries and bananas dipped in chocolate fondues, sates and finger-food canapes were served by restaurant row's grand dame, Via Maré. Rustan's Essenses gave away souvenirs.

Now try and beat that, dahlings. After all, it's Philippine Tatler, *n'est pas?*

PHILIPPINE Tatler and Ayala's power personas. Row
Cathy Bengzon and PT's managing director, Irene M

RIC
Bea
bea



BFAD # 0133 Series of 2004
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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

with Fernando Zobel de Ayala

GALS of substance and style. Mary Prieto and Josie Lichauco

LADIES IN BLACK. Mons Tantoco in Prada, Myrna Borromeo in Lord & Taylor and Ces Drilon in Alberto Ferreti

WHEN ambassadors meet. *Tres charmante* French Ambassador Renée Veyret and popular Italian Ambassador Umberto Colesanti

y complex

ena Tomeldan, Cristy Comia, PT's Anton San Diego, Winnie Nazareth, rtel-Francisco

TOD'S BIG THREE. Ayala's Jaime Zobel with Rustan's Nedy Tantoco and socialite Margarita Delgado

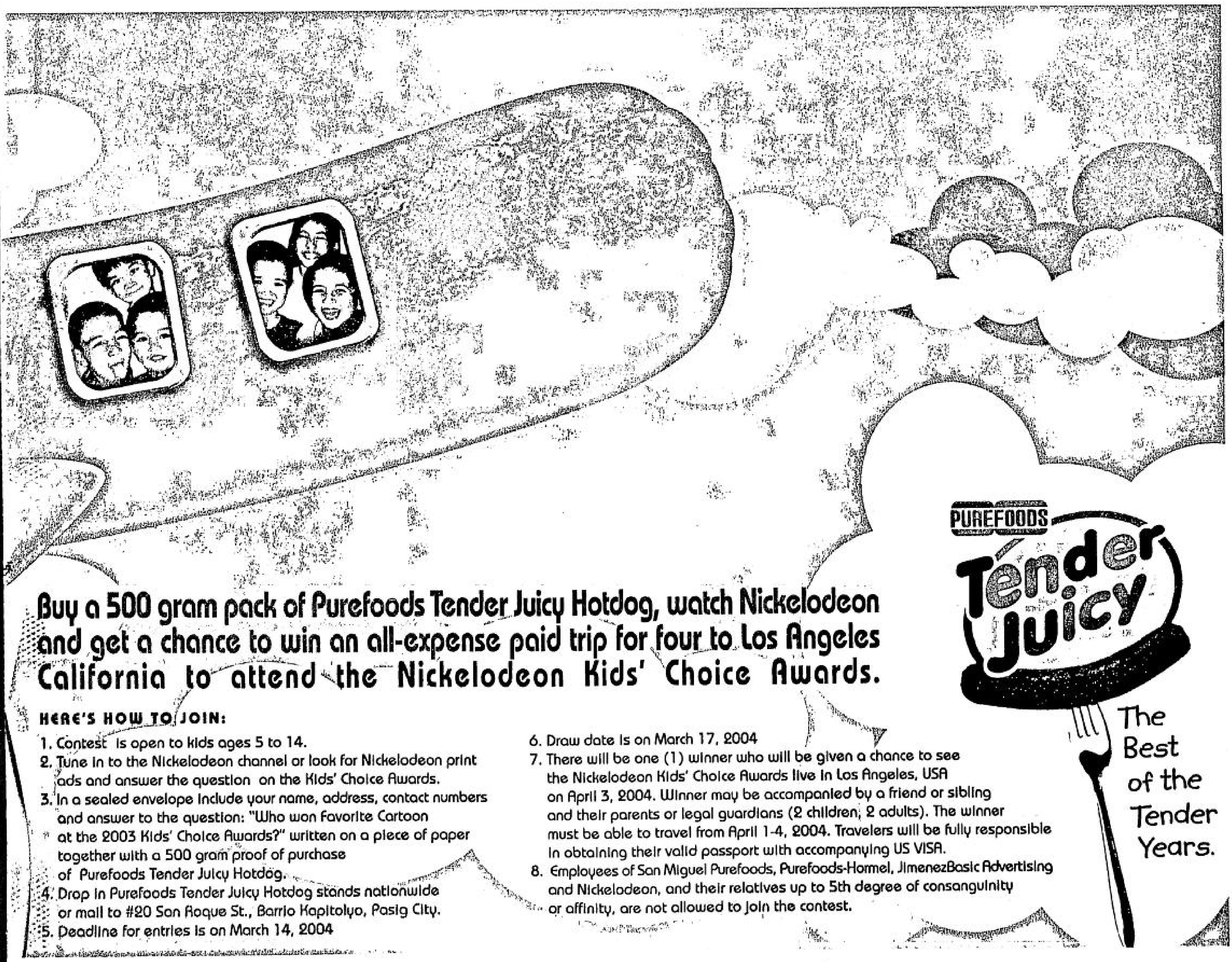
BEAMING with happiness, Rustan's heiress Maritess Tantoco is now engaged to international businessman Renato Enriquez.

ASIA'S nightingale Lani Misalucha, who wowed the audience with her unbelievable singing prowess

H AND FAMOUS. Tana Madrigal and husband Richard Gelb, Kirk Fox and Madrigal Vazquez, and Peninsula Hotel's first couple, David Bachelor and utiful, stylish Marilou B.

GANG OF BEAUTIES. Mia Borromeo, Junie Pena, Philippine Tatler editor in chief Anton San Diego, Sharmila Hiranand, Sofia Elizalde and Beng Dee

THE BABE. Bianca Zobel



Buy a 500 gram pack of Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdog, watch Nickelodeon and get a chance to win an all-expense paid trip for four to Los Angeles California to attend the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards.

HERE'S HOW TO JOIN:

1. Contest is open to kids ages 5 to 14.
2. Tune in to the Nickelodeon channel or look for Nickelodeon print ads and answer the question on the Kids' Choice Awards.
3. In a sealed envelope include your name, address, contact numbers and answer to the question: "Who won Favorite Cartoon at the 2003 Kids' Choice Awards?" written on a piece of paper together with a 500 gram proof of purchase of Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdog.
4. Drop in Purefoods Tender Juicy Hotdog stands nationwide or mail to #20 San Roque St., Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig City.
5. Deadline for entries is on March 14, 2004
6. Draw date is on March 17, 2004
7. There will be one (1) winner who will be given a chance to see the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards live in Los Angeles, USA on April 3, 2004. Winner may be accompanied by a friend or sibling and their parents or legal guardians (2 children, 2 adults). The winner must be able to travel from April 1-4, 2004. Travelers will be fully responsible in obtaining their valid passport with accompanying US VISA.
8. Employees of San Miguel Purefoods, Purefoods-Hormel, JimenezBasic Advertising and Nickelodeon, and their relatives up to 5th degree of consanguinity or affinity, are not allowed to join the contest.

PUREFOODS
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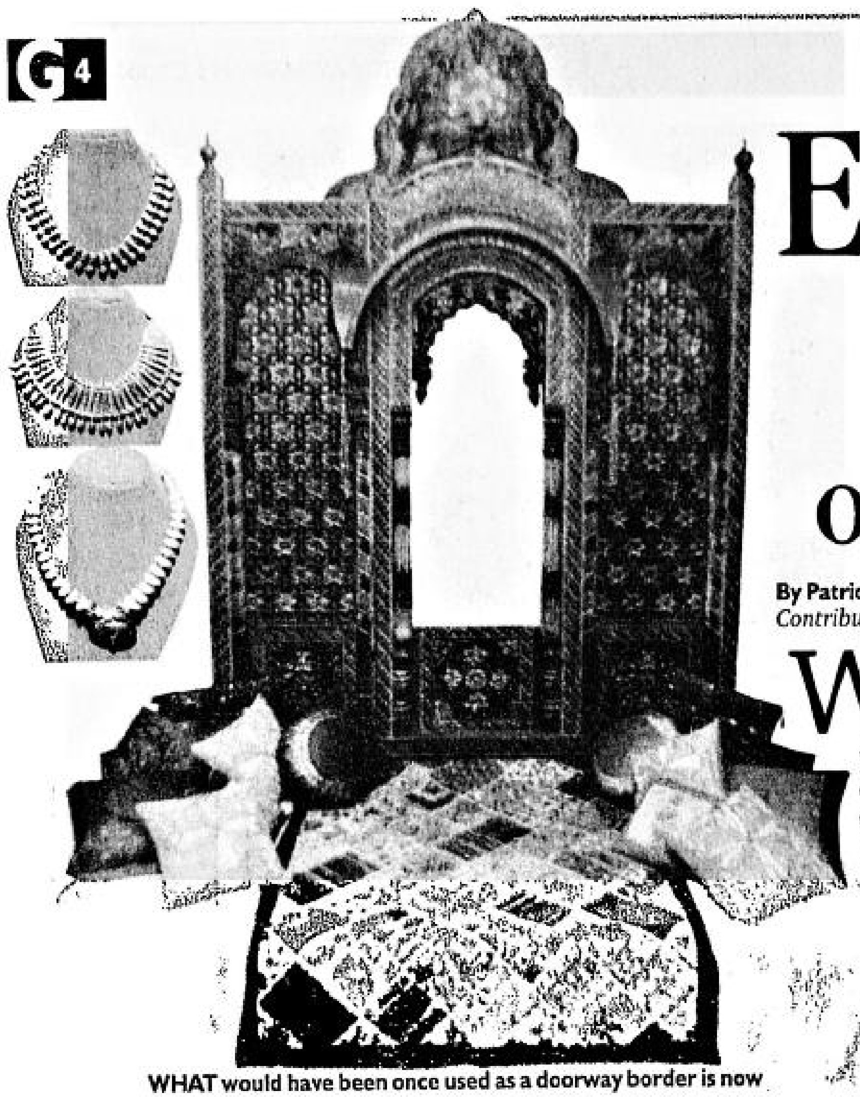
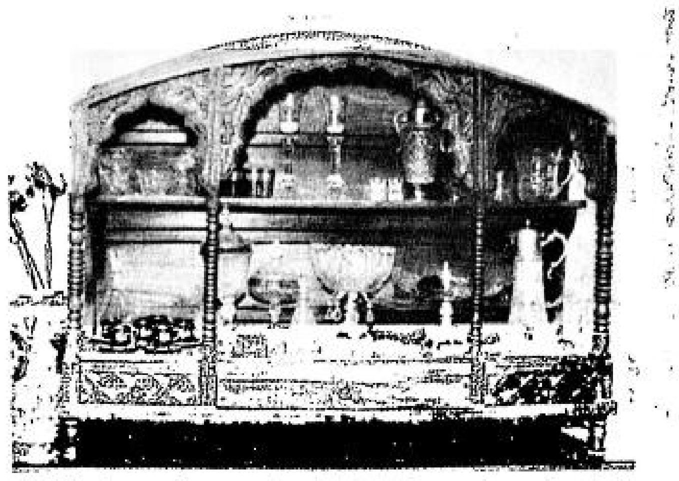
Exquisite sampling of India



WHAT would have been once used as a doorway border is now an interesting headboard piece for the bedroom.

INSET: Sterling silver necklaces with hand-beaten details and a necklace of unpolished semi-precious stones with a silver pendant and red garnet in the center

Gifts of the Maharani is a virtual temple of Indian finds



SHOW off your glassware in an intricately carved wooden shelf from India.

By Patricia Barcelon
Contributor

WE LOVE items that are original. We love to have pieces in our home that can tell a story or start up a conversation. We especially love things exotic because they are both original and eye-catching. Something from India perhaps?

Suman Gogna, a native of India and a 20-plus-year resident of the Philippines, brings things from her homeland to share her culture with Filipinos.

Gogna is the woman behind Gifts of the Maharani, which has a wide array of Indian products, ranging from shawls to armoires. Her sari fabrics are gorgeous to use as material for a dress or gown or as an accent to your décor. Their embroideries are exquisite, ranging from simple to the intricate, with gold thread and beading.

Gogna also has decorative bedspreads and traditional Indian clothing like the saris, *salwar kameez* and *kurta* pajamas, which you can wear out or lounge in at home.

On rare occasions, Gogna may just have handmade leather shoes which are so soft, it's like wearing nothing on your feet. But they are well decorated nothings.

Jewelry is yet another great Indian find. Gogna has wonderful silver pieces and semi-precious stones crafted imaginatively.

The jewelry, which tends to be ornate just like the designs of the saris, usually comes in sets of a necklace or choker, dangling earrings, and a bracelet.

Bubbly bangles

Of course, no Indian jewelry collection would be complete without a set of those lovely bangles that come in every imaginable color. There are also the classier silver ones as well as some fairly large silver pendants, studded with semi-precious stones such as turquoise, which can be strung on a simple cord of leather or a silver chain that would make an eye-catching piece to any ensemble.

The furniture and décor are just as exquisite and original as the saris and jewelry. Hand-carved wooden panels for doorways or for a bed's headboard are the bigger buys, but Gogna has dozens of little trinkets such as silver pipes, ashtrays, and figurines to fill anyone's home.

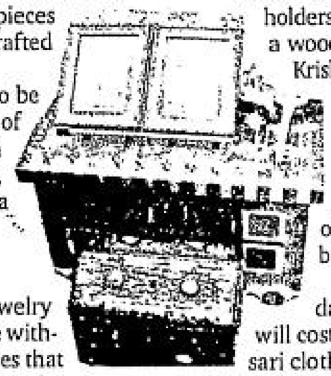
Gogna's larger pieces—cabinets, buffet tables, wooden chests and hand-carved screen dividers—are great buys. Ditto with key holders with an etching of a peacock or a wooden statuette of the Hindu god Krishna and his wife, Radharani.

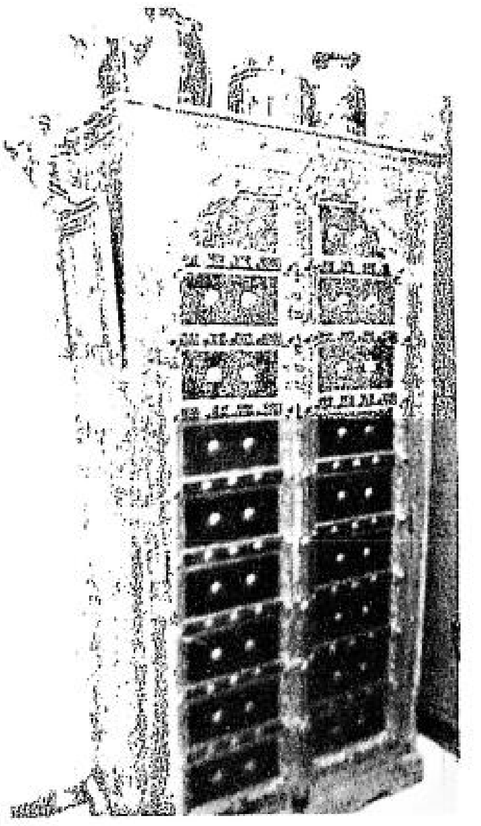
One can also find beaded embroidered throw pillows, placemats, candle holders, serving trays with that Indian touch among the wares, and of course, incense and incense burners.

Prices run the gamut here. A dainty silver ring, for example, will cost only P500, while six meters of sari cloth that many women here make into Western-style clothing with an ethnic flair, go for about P6,500. So one can shop for oneself or even buy a token gift for a friend. In fact, last Christmas, Gogna did some corporate giveaways, which definitely did not end up on the recycle-this-gift pile.

For those who love to look for interesting buys and finds, Gogna's Gifts of the Maharani (tel. 6316983 or 0917-8317288) is a treasure-trove of goodies that are just waiting to be found... and picked up!

SUMAN Gogna





CLOCKWISE, from left: Hand-carved wooden buffet table and doorway accent. Antique armoire with bronze inlay. Treasure chest inlaid with bronze used as a small table and a smaller decorative treasure chest inlaid with semi-precious stones.

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Promo Mechanics

1. Promo period is from March 1 to April 15, 2004. Last day for submission of entries is April 15, 2004.

2. Promo is open to all.

3. Every P500 [illegible] single or accumulated receipt purchase within the promo period entitles the customer to one (1) raffle coupon. The customer shall fill out the raffle coupon with name, address, telephone number and signature and drop [illegible] boxes located at all Cinderella branches.

4. Two (2) winners will each win one (1) of two (2) Yamaha Crypton motorcycles.

5. Winners may only win once.

6. Raffle draw will be on April 20, 2004 4:00pm at the Cinderella Main Office [illegible] EDSA, QC in the presence of representatives from Cinderella, Yamaha and the Department of Trade and Industry.

7. Winners will be notified by registered mail.

8. Winners may claim their prizes at the Cinderella Main Office at [illegible] EDSA QC.

9. To claim his/her prize, the winner must present the raffle stub and any valid ID with photo.

10. A 20% tax and registration for the motorcycle will be shouldered by the winner.

11. Prizes not claimed after sixty (60) days from notification shall be forfeited in favor of Cinderella.

12. Prizes are not convertible to cash.

13. Employees of Cinderella Marketing Corporation, [illegible] Management Services, Inc. and its affiliates and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the raffle.

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The Charming Stainless Steel Evolution

ELBA
ITALY

New plant varieties change look of RP gardens

Text by Tita V. Giron
Photos by Linda B. Bolido

A QUICK look around garden centers in town shows how Philippine gardens are changing with the times. Plant stores are awash with fabulous colors, shapes and sizes of new ornamental plants. And landscaping shops are teeming with trendy accessories that are surely transforming the looks of local gardens.

New *aglaonema* hybrids, for example, come in colorful hues that have not been seen before. They used to be mostly green and white. Now you see combinations of bright red, yellow and green.

Anthuriums are not just the familiar variety with heart-shaped leaves. Today, they are grown mainly for their leaves that have unbelievably fancy shapes and huge sizes.

Gardeners are obviously changing, too. They don't seem to believe in superstitions anymore and have become more venturesome than their predecessors who had a set of dos and don'ts in landscaping.

Take for instance the *sansevierias* that are making a comeback in the local market. In earlier days, folks shield away from the plant—also known then as *espada* and "mother-in-law's tongue"—because its pointed leaves were thought to bring bad luck.

Now, *sansevierias* are in great demand because of a scientific finding that they clean the air of pollution. Their fancy name complements their exotic shapes and leaf design.

NEW/ H3

ONE of many varieties of Passiflora vine, this spectacular plant has several three-inch-wide scarlet flowers.

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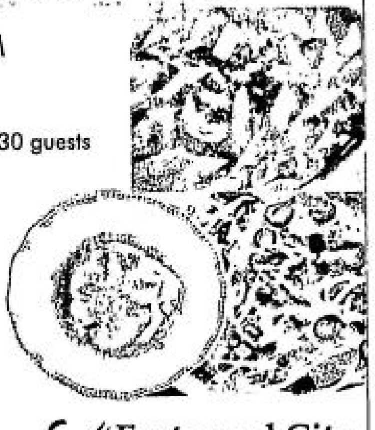

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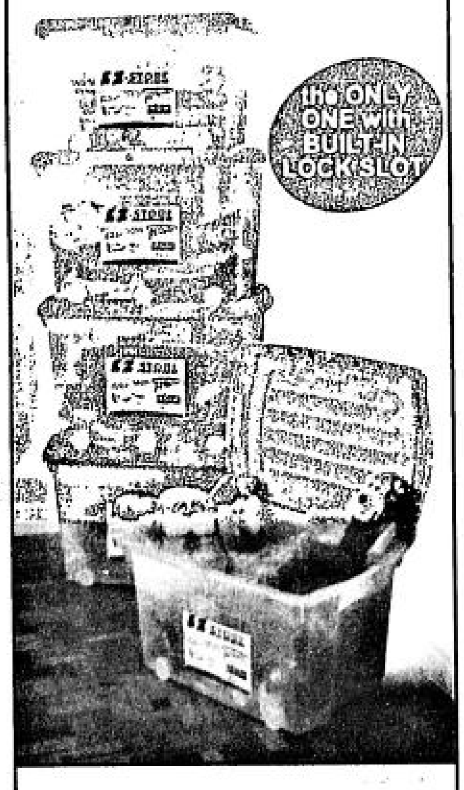
MARCH 12 FRIDAY 438-3942

Kalat Mo?
Sagot Ko.



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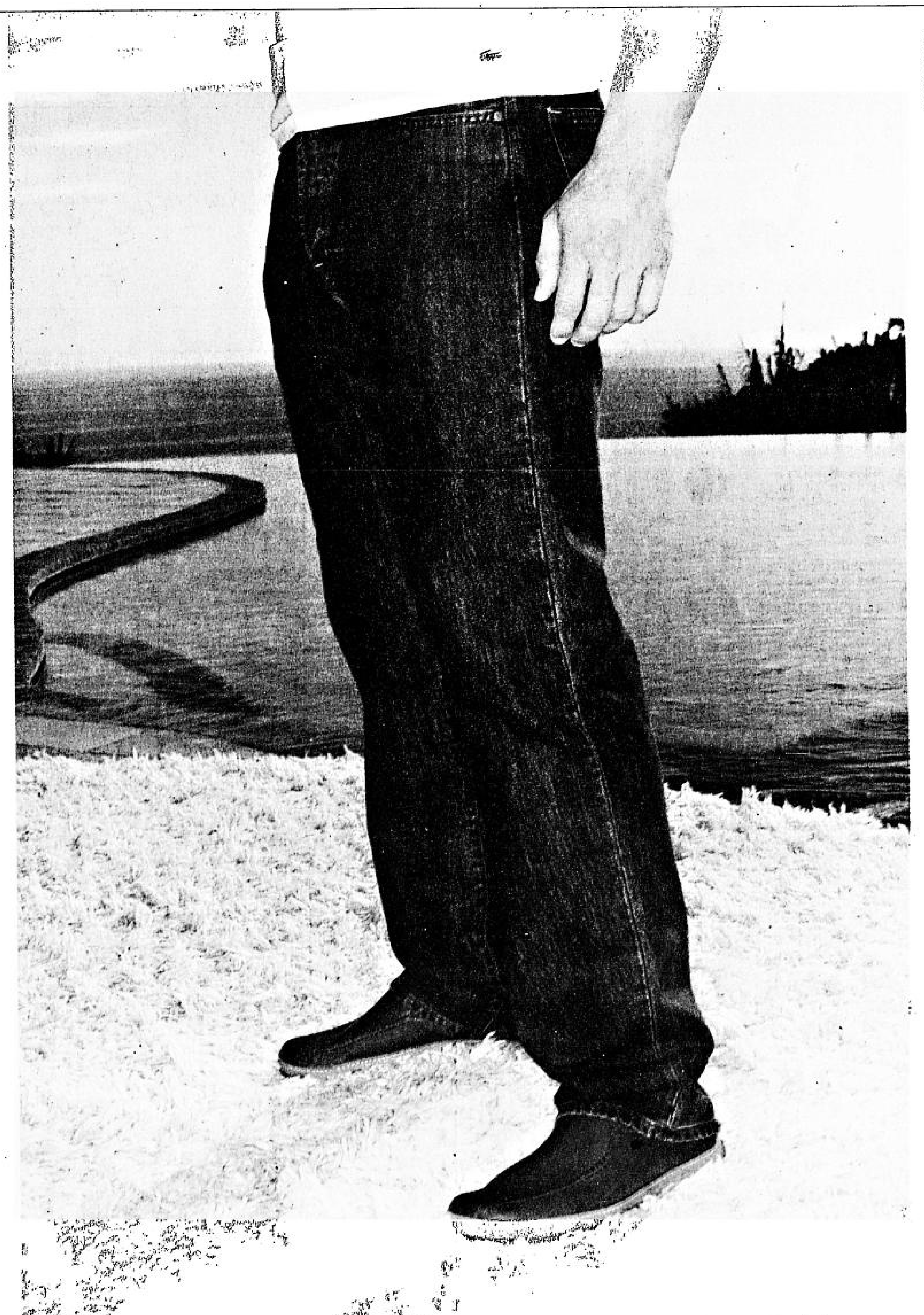

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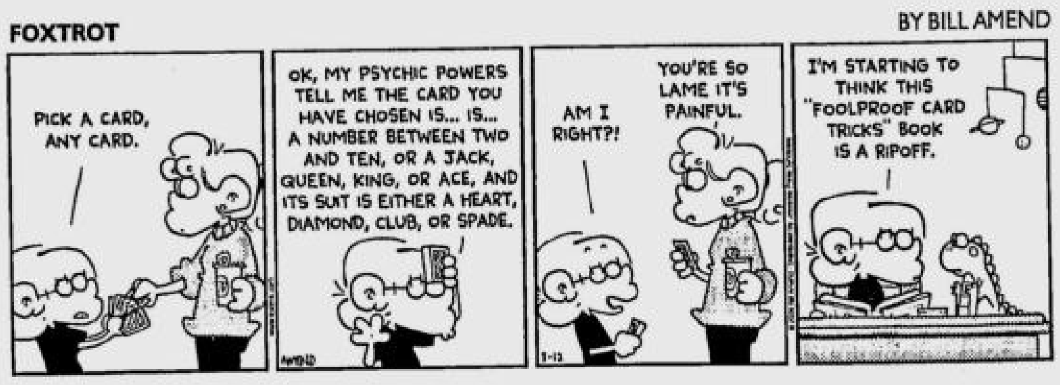
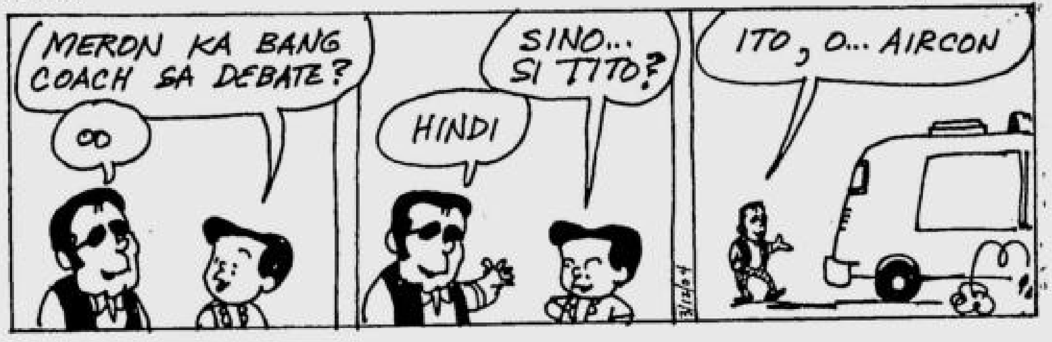
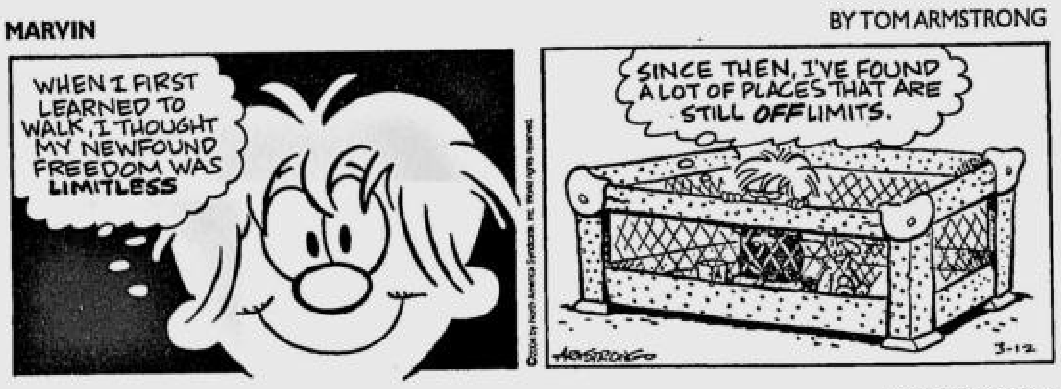
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


PICK A CARD, ANY CARD.
OK, MY PSYCHIC POWERS TELL ME THE CARD YOU HAVE CHOSEN IS... IS... A NUMBER BETWEEN TWO AND TEN, OR A JACK, QUEEN, KING, OR ACE, AND ITS SUIT IS EITHER A HEART, DIAMOND, CLUB, OR SPADE.
AMEND
AM I RIGHT?!
YOU'RE SO LAME IT'S PAINFUL.
3-12
I'M STARTING TO THINK THIS "FOOLPROOF CARD TRICKS" BOOK IS A RIPOFF.

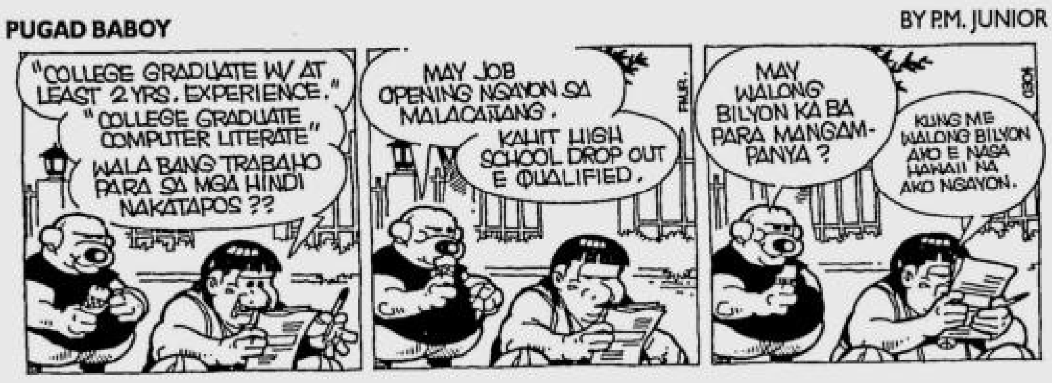
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


MERON KA BANG COACH SA DEBATE?
OO
SINO... SI TITO?
HINDI
3/12/04
ITO, O... AIRCON

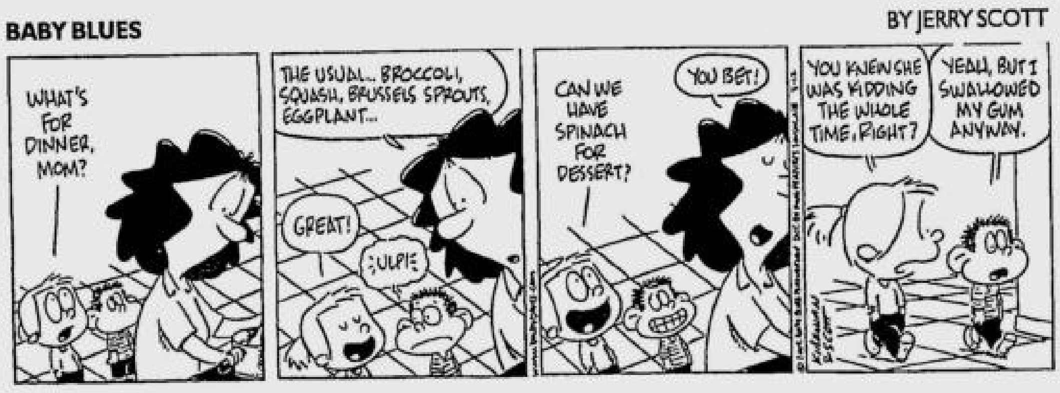
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WHEN I FIRST LEARNED TO WALK, I THOUGHT MY NEWFOUND FREEDOM WAS LIMITLESS
SINCE THEN, I'VE FOUND A LOT OF PLACES THAT ARE STILL OFF LIMITS.
ARMSTRONG
3-12

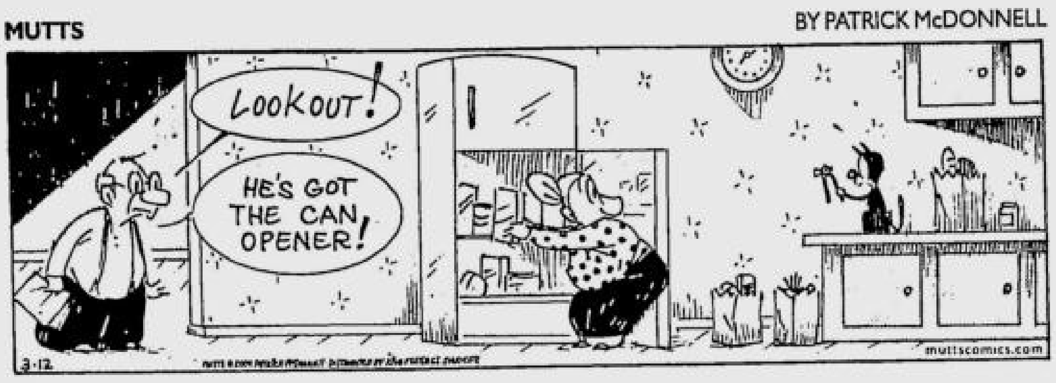
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


"COLLEGE GRADUATE W/ AT LEAST 2 YRS. EXPERIENCE."
"COLLEGE GRADUATE COMPUTER LITERATE"
WALA BANG TRABAHO PARA SA MGA HINDI NAKATAPOS ??
MAY JOB OPENING NGAYON SA MALACAÑANG.
KAHIT HIGH SCHOOL DROP OUT E QUALIFIED.
MAY WALONG BILYON KA BA PARA MANGAMPANYA ?
KUNG ME WALONG BILYON AKO E NASA HAWAII NA AKO NGAYON.

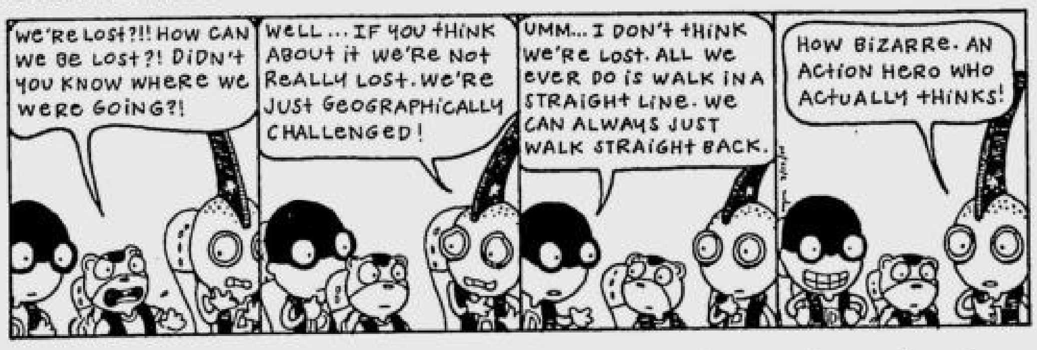
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S FOR DINNER, MOM?
THE USUAL... BROCCOLI, SQUASH, BRUSSELS SPROUTS, EGGPLANT...
GREAT!
GULP!
CAN WE HAVE SPINACH FOR DESSERT?
YOU BET!
YOU KNEW SHE WAS KIDDING THE WHOLE TIME, RIGHT?
YEAH, BUT I SWALLOWED MY GUM ANYWAY.

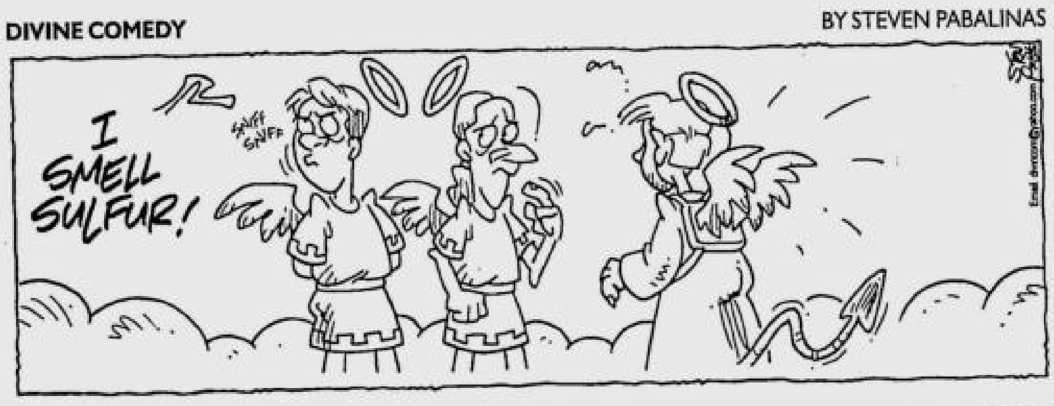
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


LOOK OUT!
HE'S GOT THE CAN OPENER!
3-12
muttscomics.com

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WE'RE LOST?!! HOW CAN WE BE LOST?! DIDN'T YOU KNOW WHERE WE WERE GOING?!
WELL... IF YOU THINK ABOUT IT WE'RE NOT REALLY LOST. WE'RE JUST GEOGRAPHICALLY CHALLENGED!
UMM... I DON'T THINK WE'RE LOST. ALL WE EVER DO IS WALK IN A STRAIGHT LINE. WE CAN ALWAYS JUST WALK STRAIGHT BACK.
HOW BIZARRE. AN ACTION HERO WHO ACTUALLY THINKS!

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I SMELL SULFUR!
SNIFF SNIFF

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are bold and daring. You face setbacks and disappointments with tremendous courage. Whatever you do, you do with intensity and passion. You express yourself physically as well as verbally. When you do things, you go all the way. The year ahead will present interesting choices for you. (When one door closes, another one opens.) Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: James Taylor, musician; Liza Minnelli, entertainer; Edward Albee, playwright.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You gain nothing by being critical of the political views or religious beliefs of others today. Don't throw stones.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Avoid arguments with a friend (or a group) about shared responsibilities or the joint ownership of something. Don't get petty. Remember your objective.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a terrible day to cross your boss. Ego struggles with authority figures are practically inevitable. Be polite to anyone who swaggers.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Someone might try to tell you how to improve your life or how to improve how you do your job. Possibly, you're trying to do the same thing to someone else.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might have to contend with a breakdown of machinery or systems today. It's frustrating, but what can you do? Lots of mechanical problems crop up right now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Someone might want you to let go of old habits. You could feel pressured to do this. Alternatively, you might be nagging somebody else to do the same thing. Don't do it. Live and let live.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Machinery breakdowns or systems crashing at work are likely today. Your efficiency and productivity will definitely be delayed in some way. Relax. You can't push the river.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You could feel obsessed about buying something today. Try to resist this. That's the worst frame of mind under which to spend your money.

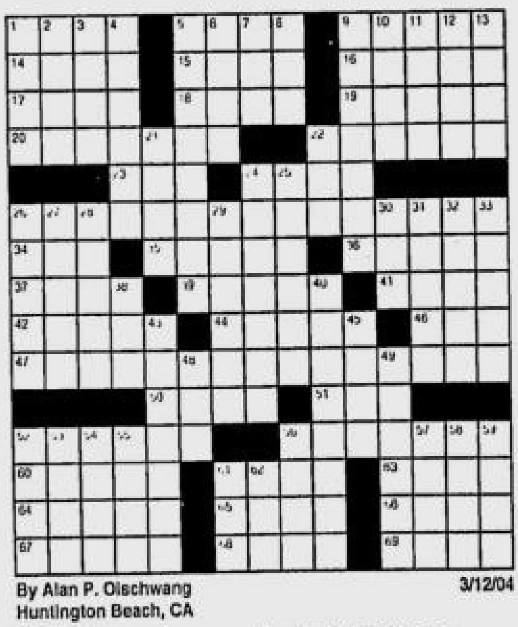
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): It's tough dealing with people in authority today. They might demand that you account for yourself and your actions. Don't get huffy.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Don't try to proselytize, persuade, sell, convince or influence anyone's thinking today. Just take care of your own thoughts and values. Each person has to develop his or her own path.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): A powerful group might oppose you about something, especially at work or connected with how you spend your money. Don't go looking for a fight today. Stay mellow.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel challenged by authority figures, the police and bosses today. Don't take the bait. Keep a low profile. Don't try to prove anything.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

3/12/04

ACROSS
1 Too smooth
5 Foreboding sign
9 Start of Gracie Allen quote
14 One-billionth: pref.
15 Presidential stopper
16 Saintly circles
17 United __ Emirates
18 Bridge position
19 Collector's book
20 Part 2 of quote
22 Collects bit by bit
23 Actor Brynner
24 Rational
26 Part 3 of quote
34 But for Brutus
35 Subdivision of a people
36 Stone marker
37 Window ledge
39 Sample recordings
41 Famous apple-splitter
42 Muse of poetry
44 Farm buildings
46 Hanoi holiday
47 Part 4 of quote
50 Important times
51 Payable on demand
52 Go against
56 Part 5 of quote
60 French river
61 Practice punching
63 Elmer or Jerry
64 Nearby
65 Fairy-tale beast
66 Son of Seth
67 End of quote
68 Alan or Cheryl
69 Elephant feature

DOWN
1 Do beaver's work
2 Zhivago's love
3 Claire and Balin
4 Bonds and Bonilla
5 Boss of bosses
6 Intend
7 UFO crew
8 __ for profit
9 Hartford team
10 Patriot Nathan
11 Isle near Corsica
12 Sentence subject
13 Distinctive doctrines
21 Throw out
22 Econ. meas.
24 Yields
25 Iris ring
26 Japanese immigrant
27 Strange
28 Dwight's rival
29 Cancun snooze
30 Addams Family cousin
31 Take care of
32 Carl of the gridiron
33 Greek letter
38 Old Ford model
40 Mended with melted metal
43 Reflexive pronoun
45 Predatory shorebird
48 Lode load
49 Weasel's cousin
52 __ podrida
53 Milne character
54 Type measure
55 __ Roberts U.
56 Unit of length
57 Japanese ethnic group
58 Sgt. and cpl.
59 Escritoire
61 Scale note
62 Links org

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

E	T	C	H	■	A	T	O	M	■	S	E	A	L	S
A	R	E	A	■	H	U	L	A	■	E	M	C	E	E
T	U	L	L	E	A	N	D	D	I	E	S	H	O	P
S	F	T	I	N	■	■	S	E	N	T	■	E	N	T
■	■	■	D	I	S	T	■	■	C	H	O	■	■	■
■	S	U	E	D	E	I	N	T	H	E	W	I	N	D
O	A	H	■	S	E	P	I	A	■	S	E	N	O	R
T	U	B	A	■	P	O	T	T	S	■	S	A	N	E
I	N	A	L	L	■	F	R	A	U	D	■	N	O	W
C	A	N	V	A	S	F	O	R	V	O	T	E	S	■
■	■	■	A	T	T	■	■	S	A	R	A	■	■	■
A	L	L	■	H	O	W	L	■	■	I	R	A	I	L
S	E	R	G	E	P	R	O	T	E	C	T	O	R	S
P	O	S	E	R	■	A	L	O	E	■	A	N	I	S
S	I	T	E	S	■	P	A	W	L	■	R	E	P	O

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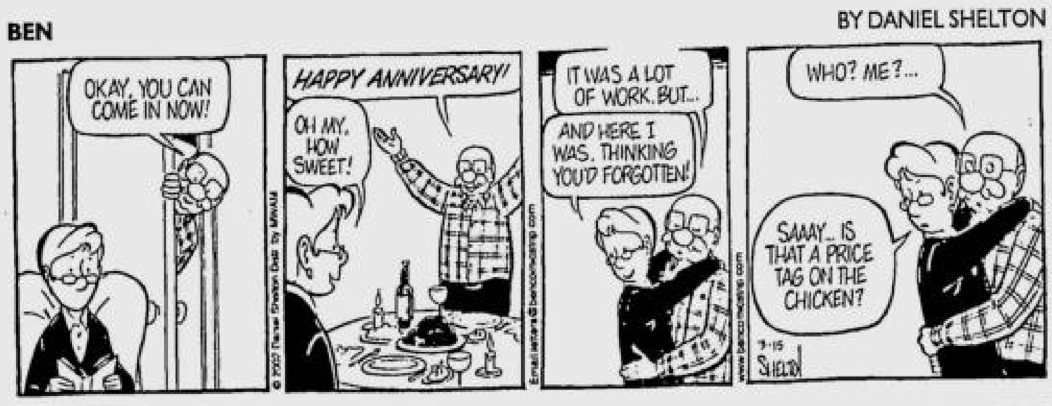
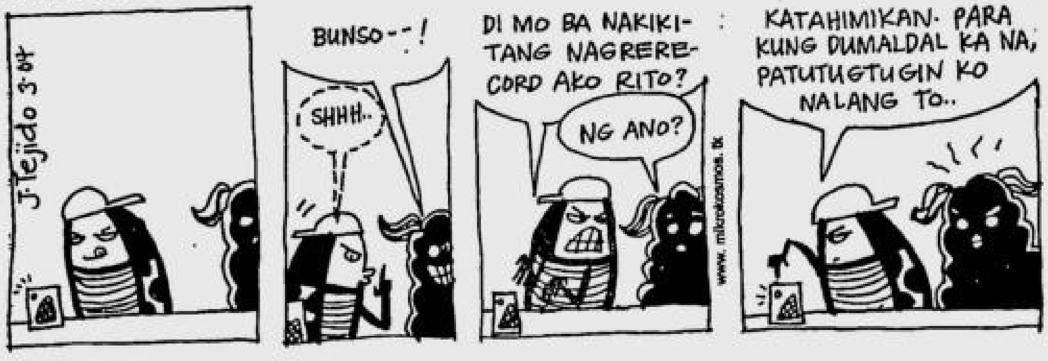
3/12/04

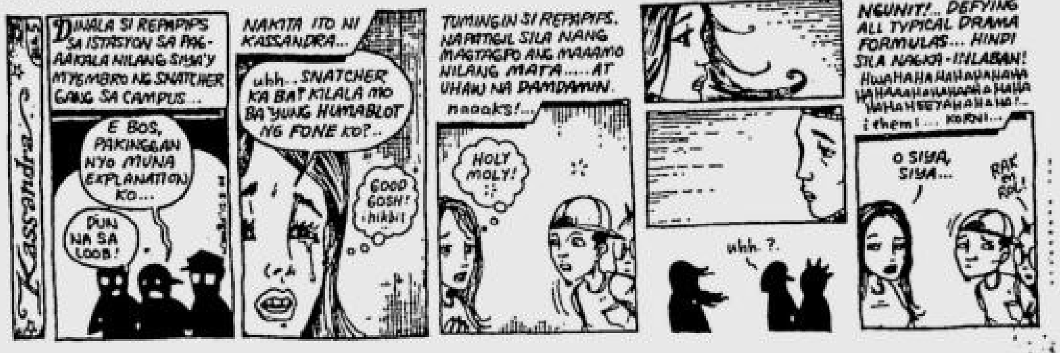
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


OKAY, YOU CAN COME IN NOW!
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!
OH MY. HOW SWEET!
IT WAS A LOT OF WORK, BUT...
AND HERE I WAS, THINKING YOU'D FORGOTTEN!
WHO? ME?...
SAAAY... IS THAT A PRICE TAG ON THE CHICKEN?
SHELTON

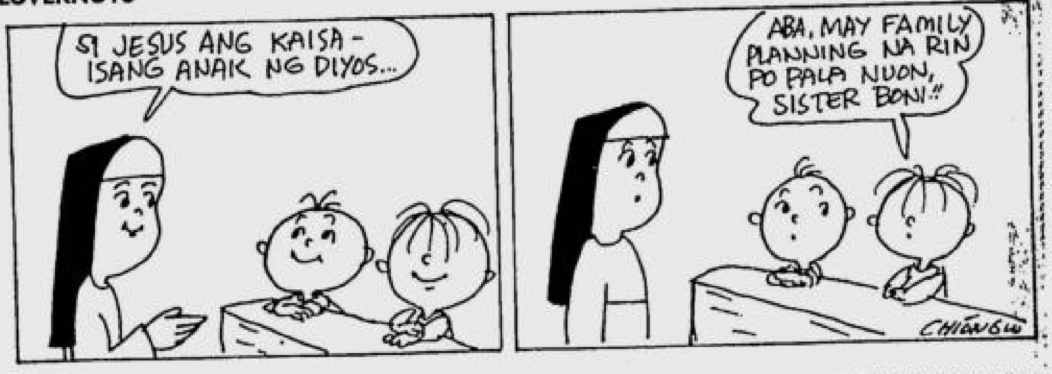
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


J. Tejido 3-04
BUNSO--!
SHHH..
DI MO BA NAKIKITANG NAGRERECORD AKO RITO?
NG ANO?
www.mikrokosmos.tk
KATAHIMIKAN. PARA KUNG DUMALDAL KA NA, PATUTUGTUGIN KO NALANG TO..

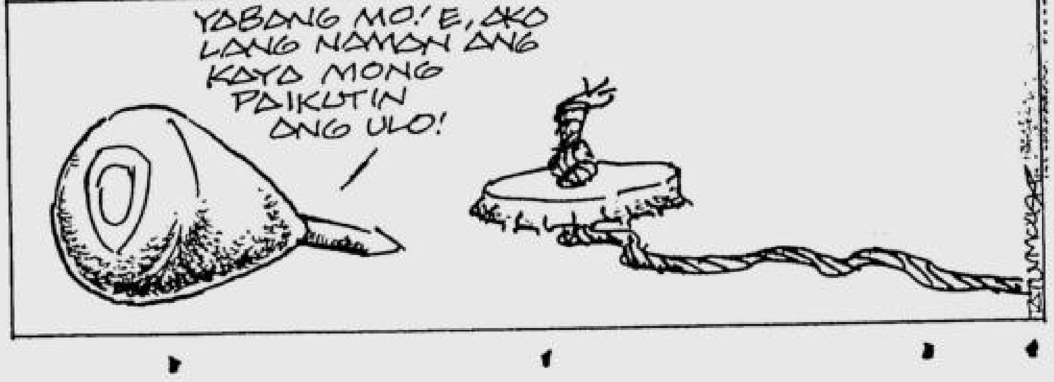
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

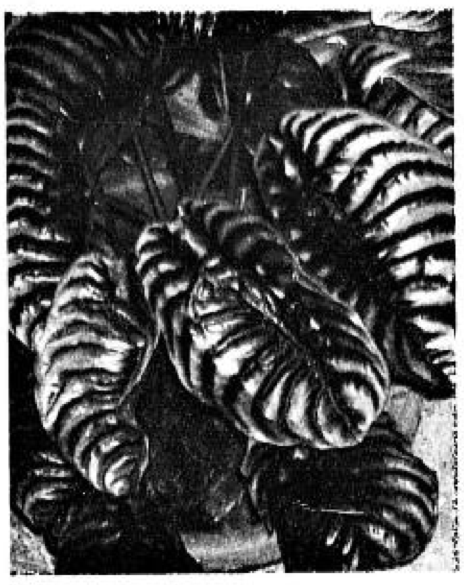

Kassandra
DINALA SI REPAPIPS SA ISTASYON SA PAG-AAKALA NILANG SIYA'Y MYEMBRO NG SNATCHER GANG SA CAMPUS..
E BOS, PAKINGGAN NYO MUNA EXPLANATION KO...
DUN NA SA LOOB!
NAKITA ITO NI KASSANDRA...
uhh.. SNATCHER KA BAT KILALA MO BA YUNG HUMABLOT NG FONE KO?..
GOOD GOSH! hikbi!
TUMINGIN SI REPAPIPS. NAPATIGIL SILA NANG MAGTAGPO ANG MAAAMO NILANG MATA...... AT UHAW NA DAMDAMIN.
naaaks!...
HOLY MOLY!
uhh.?.
NGUNIT!.. DEFYING ALL TYPICAL DRAMA FORMULAS... HINDI SILA NAGKA-IN-LABAN! HWAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA HAHAAAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA HAHAHEEYAHAHAHA!.. ¡them!... KORNI...
O SIYA, SIYA...
RAK EN ROL!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

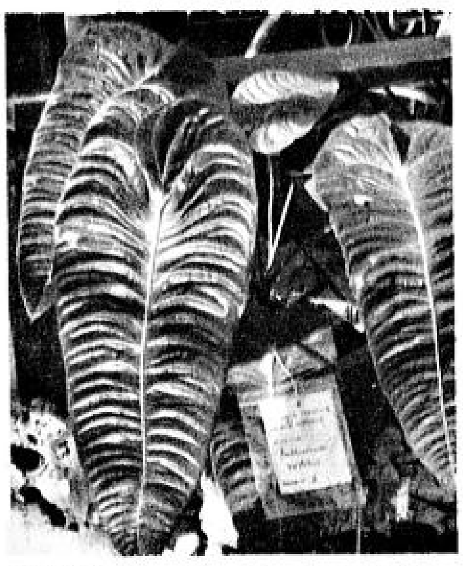

SI JESUS ANG KAISA-ISANG ANAK NG DIYOS...
ABA, MAY FAMILY PLANNING NA RIN PO PALA NUON, SISTER BONI!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


YABANG MO! E, AKO LANG NAMAN ANG KAYA MONG PAIKUTIN ANG ULO!

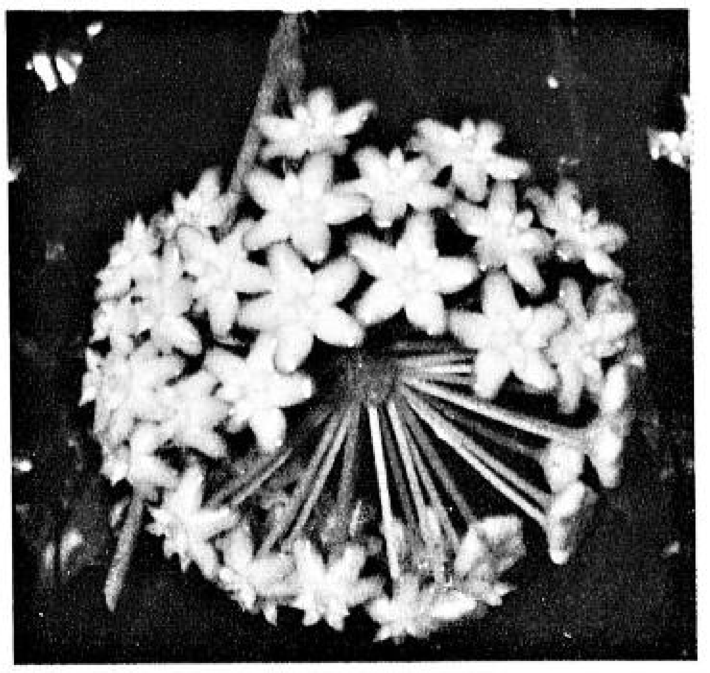


A WELL-CULTURED *Alocasia cuprea*, this old favorite has dusky color with metallic copper sheen on the leaves.



MOTHER Nature's handiwork is evident in this fascinating *Anthurium veitchii* with quilt-like leaves. A well-cultured plant can produce leaves over three feet long.

AN ORNAMENTAL vine with white flowers, which are luminous at night



BREATHTAKING flower clusters of Hoya vine have waxy, slightly scented blooms, hence the plant is also more popularly known as "waxy hoya" and "honey plant." A single vine produces dozens of flowers throughout the year.

New plant varieties change look . . .

From page H1

(For more information on sansevierias, call propagator Delia Chuan at 9617836 and 0916-5798980.)

Garden vines

Vines are evidently making a comeback in local gardens. In addition to old garden varieties like jasmines, jade vine and bridal bouquet, there's an unbelievable selection of exotic climbers and trailers in the market. Seen recently at the garden show of the Philippine Horticulture Society (PHS) were *passifloras* with bright orange and red flowers, lipstick vines, new guinea creeper (sometimes called coral vine), moonflower, *clematis* and *stephanotis*. Society member Adeling Almazar (tel. 6963336/1246) has more information on where to get these vines.

A young couple in Diliman is currently propagating a garden variety of *cadena de amor* that is expected to draw attention when it is out in the market. Dominic and Joselyn Javier (tel. 9214740) said they found the variety in the plant market in Bangkok. It produces a mass of white flowers. Unlike the common street vine that grows wild and becomes uncontrollable, the new vine is manageable. It can be grown in hanging baskets or along the garden wall.

Other trendy plants

One outstanding plant that drew a lot of attention at the recent garden show in the Manila Seedling Bank was a variegated *homalomena* with striking splashes of color on the otherwise all-green leaves. The entire plant looked like the work of a tie-dye artist who splashed yellow, cream and green paint on the heart-shaped leaves.

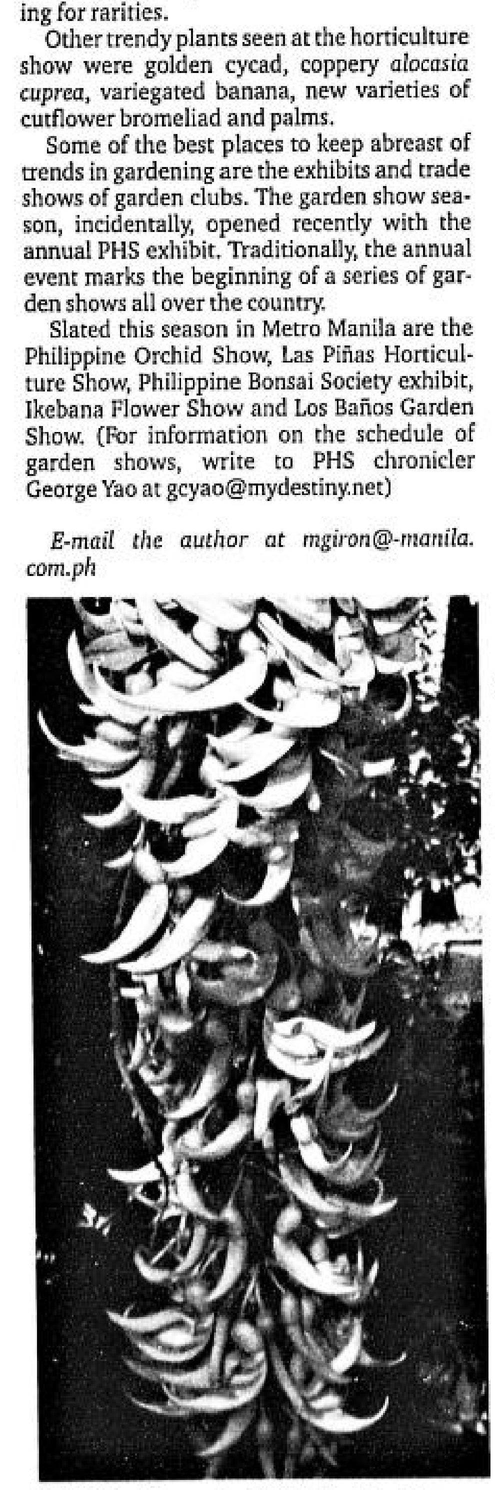
Owned by PHS president P.J. Nepomuceno, the *homalomena* is just one of many other rarities in the collector's private garden. His mother Monina has her own collection of rare varieties. Both ardent collectors, mother and son go around the world searching for rarities.

Other trendy plants seen at the horticulture show were golden cycad, coppery *alocasia cuprea*, variegated banana, new varieties of cutflower bromeliad and palms.

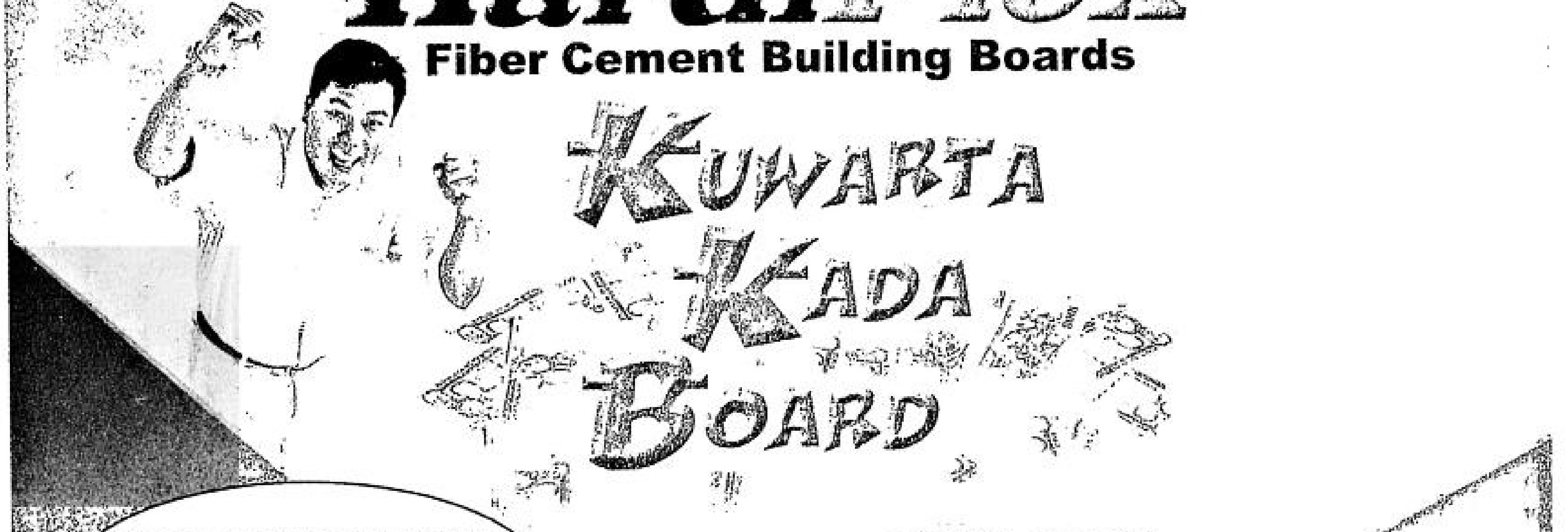
Some of the best places to keep abreast of trends in gardening are the exhibits and trade shows of garden clubs. The garden show season, incidentally, opened recently with the annual PHS exhibit. Traditionally, the annual event marks the beginning of a series of garden shows all over the country.

Slated this season in Metro Manila are the Philippine Orchid Show, Las Piñas Horticulture Show, Philippine Bonsai Society exhibit, Ikebana Flower Show and Los Baños Garden Show. (For information on the schedule of garden shows, write to PHS chronicler George Yao at gcyao@mydestiny.net)

E-mail the author at mgiron@-manila.com.ph



WHEN in bloom, the Philippine jade vine produces this eye-catching cluster of bracts and flowers. The vigorous vine needs its own sunny space in the garden. It has a kin that produces pendants of coral-colored blooms.



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42. Marcelino Herainis	Bukidnon
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47 Sacana Kondo	Cotabato City
48 Alice Lao	Monteverde Nora St
49. Benjamin Lao	La Verna Hily
50. Christopher Lee	Cagayan de Oro
51 Alberto Lim	Davao City
52. Miguela Mabanag	Mabini, Coreval St.
53. Elizabeth Magallon	Ozamis City
54. Darenda Magaulan	Ozamis City
55 Melanio Magayano	Davao City
56. Edward Malbacias	Surigao Del Norte
57 Rosie Manparo	Davao City
58. Analyn Manucay	Davao City
59. Roberto Martinez	Country Homes
60. Leonardo Mejos	Cagayan de Oro
61. Mabel Montana	Malaybalay City
62 Mannan Muharram	Zamboanga City
63 Isidro Naraiol	Cotabato City
64 Angelina Oracez	Betlehem St
65 Pablo Oropesa	JASA Km. 12
66 Giovanni Pagaran	Butuan City
67 Violeta Paja	Carmen St.
68 Porferico Parlosa	Zamboanga City
69. Jinla Patac	Tagum, Davao del Norte
70. Grace Patnugot	Jupiter St., SIS
71. Carmen Patricio	Davao City
72 Hilario Patot Jr	Butuan City
73. Christine Quesada	Gen. Santos City
74 Ruel Quilla	Davao City
75 Marlyn Rapals	Davao City
76 Rocona Recoleto	Libertad, Misamis Oriental
77 Brenda Sabaybay	Cotabato City
78 Bemasol Sakkam	Jolo, Sulu
79 Maham Sakkan	Jolo, Sulu
80 Majun Salapuddin	Balwasan St.
81 Benzar Samparani	Jolo, Sulu
82 Benino Sin	c/o Electrical
83 Vicky Silatan	Cotabato City
84 Remedios Simbajon	Ozamis City
85 Alara Soraida	Zamboanga City
86 Robino Po Sun	Surigao
87 Mr Taha	Camella Homes
88. Melinda Talipasan	Cotabato City
89 Zosimo Talue Jr	Cagayan de Oro
90 Allan Tamparong	Ozamis City
91 Jose Nelson Tan	Cagayan de Oro
92. Manuel Tan	Davao City
93 Ariel Torota	Cabaguio, Agdao
94 Tarsum Usman	Cotabato City
95 Jeffrey Viloha	Davao Bayan
96. Teresita L. Yu	Surigao City

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Product	TLC Price	Reg. Price
SWIFT Sweet n' Juicy Hotdog • Cocktail 1 kg	P108.00/pk.	Reg. Price 112.00
PUREFOODS Tender Juicy Cheesedog • Regular 1 kg	P151.00/pk.	Reg. Price 152.75
NESTLÉ Premium Milk • Mocha • Chocolate 1 L	P63.00 ea.	Reg. Price 69.00
MINOLA Cooking Oil Plastic 1 L	P49.50 ea.	Reg. Price 51.75
DEL MONTE Instant Marinade Mix • Beef Steak & Tapa • Pork BBQ 110 mL	P27.50 ea.	Reg. Price 29.70
AJINOMOTO Ginisa Flavor Mix 50 g	P9.00 ea.	Reg. Price 9.50
CAMPBELL'S Cream Soup • Asparagus • Mushroom 430 g	P87.00 ea.	Reg. Price 91.50
RAM Garbanzos 225 g	P13.00 ea.	Reg. Price 13.75 Not available in SM Baguio & Lucena
CENTURY Bangus In Oil • Hot Style • Spanish Style 155 g	P17.00 ea.	Reg. Price 17.25
BLUE BAY Sardines • in Tomato Sauce • in Tomato Sauce w/ Chili 155 g	P7.65 ea.	Reg. Price 7.90
ARGENTINA Corned Beef 175 g x 4's	P91.00/pk.	
PUREFOODS Carne Norte 150 g	P17.25 ea.	Reg. Price 17.35
PISTA Instant Pancit Ulam • Kamatis 60 g	P4.80 ea.	Reg. Price 5.00
QUICK CHOW Cup Mami • On Selected Flavors 50 g	P9.50 ea.	Reg. Price 10.00
NUTRI-LICIOUS Mom's Real Mayo 220 mL	P34.50 ea.	Reg. Price 36.00
KRAFT Miracle Whip Sandwich Spread 470 mL	P56.25 ea.	Reg. Price 59.50
MAGNOLIA Cheezee Spread • Pimiento 250 g	P44.00 ea.	Reg. Price 46.25
LUDY'S Sweet & Creamy Peanut Butter 224 g	P31.75 ea.	Reg. Price 34.75
BIRCH TREE Full Cream Milk Powder 400 g	P84.50 ea.	Reg. Price 89.50
DUMEX 1+ Growing Up Milk • Honey 900 g	P289.50 ea.	Reg. Price 299.50
ANGEL Evaporada 170 mL	P10.75 ea.	Reg. Price 11.50
PILLSBURY Pinoy Fiesta Cake Mix • On Selected Flavors 517 g	P91.50 ea.	Reg. Price 104.50
NISSIN Choco Wafer 20's	P15.50/pk.	Reg. Price 16.50
GIZIKU Wafer Stick 400 g	P38.50/pk.	Reg. Price 41.50
ECCO Choko-Choko Handy Pack 20's	P17.50/pk.	Reg. Price 18.50
TANGO Chocolate Bar • On Selected Flavors 200 g	P59.50 ea.	Reg. Price 64.50

Fresh Pick Idea

Maggi

TOFU SINIGANG WITH BOLA-BOLA

Ingredients:

1/2 kg. ground pork
3 tbsps. cornstarch
1/3 cup finely chopped singkamas
1 pc. egg, beaten
4 cups water
2 cups tofu, cubed
1 sachet 25 g. MAGGI Sinigang sa Sampalok with Gabi
1/4 cup chopped spring onions

Procedure:

Mix ground pork with cornstarch, singkamas and egg. Form into balls and set aside. In a pot, boil 4 cups of water. When boiling, drop in the bola-bola one at a time. Add in the tofu and simmer for 15 minutes. Pour in MAGGI Sinigang sa Sampalok with Gabi. Top with spring onions.

TLC

Product	Reg. Price	TLC Price
MONTEREY Ground Pork	Reg. P 147.00	135
MONTEREY Beef Cubes	Reg. P 185.00	170
MONTEREY Beef Breakfast Steak	Reg. P 280.00	235
BIG MAMA Pork Cubes	Reg. P 165.00	150
BIG MAMA Pork Ribs Shoulder	Reg. P 142.00	128
BIG MAMA Lean Ground Pork	Reg. P 159.00	137
Pusit Bisaya		142
Blue Marlin		215
Tofu		19
MAGGI Sinigang Sa Sampalok with Gabi 25 g.	Reg. P 7.75	7
Eggplant		18
Broccoli		99
Red Bell Pepper		29
Mango Sapadera		39
Watermelon Champion		20
FUJI Apple #36		60
RED GLOBE Grapes		145

Product	TLC Price	Reg. Price
RAM California Raisins • Seedless 30 g / 6's	P43.50/pk.	Reg. Price 46.50 Not available in SM Baguio
FIL-CHOICE Banana Chips 250 g	P24.00/pk.	Reg. Price 24.50
LEGEND Wave Potato Chips • Surfin' Sour Cream w/ Cheddar 75 g	P19.00 ea.	Reg. Price 20.50
MENTOS Chewy Candy • Ice Honey Lemon 50's	P21.00/pk.	Reg. Price 22.50
FUNCHUM Fruit Juice Drink • Orange • Apple 200 mL	P4.50 ea.	Reg. Price 4.75
ZEST-O Milk-O Full Cream Milk 200 mL	P8.25 ea.	Reg. Price 8.95
TANG Powdered Juice Drink • Lemon Refill, 500 g	P35.95/pk.	Reg. Price 37.50
E-PLUS Energy Drink 150 mL	P21.50 ea.	Reg. Price 22.50
DENTAL-B Ice Adult Toothbrush • Hard • Medium • Soft	P48.75 ea.	Reg. Price 53.75
BACTIDOL Antiseptic Mouthwash 250 mL	P237.75 ea.	Reg. Price 249.75
SO FRESH Sanitary Napkin • Maxi w/ Wings 8's	P25.50/pk.	Reg. Price 26.75
SUMMER'S EVE Feminine Wash • Sensitive 237 mL (8 oz)	P185.00 ea.	Reg. Price 194.75
FINESSE Shampoo/ Conditioner • All variants 443 mL (15 fl. oz)	P199.75 ea.	Reg. Price 217.75
EXTRADERM Maxi Peel #3 60 mL	P50.00 ea.	Reg. Price 53.75
JOHNSON'S Pure Essentials Young White Lotion 100 mL	P46.75 ea.	Reg. Price 49.75
DIAL Deo Bath Soap • On Selected Variants 380 g / 3's	P107.75/pk.	Reg. Price 117.75
TIM & TAM Disposable Diaper • XL 20's	P154.75/pk.	Reg. Price 164.50
BABY SCENT Cologne • On Selected Variants 125 mL	P39.75 ea.	Reg. Price 41.75
CUDDLES Cotton Buds • On Selected Color Tips 108's	P10.00/pk.	Reg. Price 10.75
JOY Bathroom Tissue 2 Ply, 250 Sheets 12's	P144.75/pk.	Reg. Price 151.75
PRIDE Detergent Bar • White 440 g	P12.75 ea.	Reg. Price 13.50
GLADE After-Flush Deodorizer • On Selected Variants 70 g	P37.00 ea.	Reg. Price 39.75
KIWI Instant Shoe Shine • All Colors 75 mL	P98.00 ea.	Reg. Price 102.75
ZIM Cleanser • Calamansi • Fresh 350 g	P18.00 ea.	Reg. Price 19.75
DURA-BRITE Scrubbing Sponge 80 x 100 x 30 mm	P15.75 ea.	Reg. Price 17.75 Not available in SM Baguio & Lucena
SCOTCH-BRITE Scrub Sponge • Heavy Duty 75 x 100 x 30 mm	P22.75 ea.	Reg. Price 24.75
EUROLUX Maximizer Capsulite • Daylite 25 watts	P189.75 ea.	Reg. Price 199.75 Not available in SM Baguio

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2 New Properties
New Lifestyles
Unveiled in 1 Day

Property Previews

Property Previews begin
for Cottonwoods
and Vita Toscana

Cottonwoods by 360° Living offers homes built around nature

You and your family have begun to reap the rewards of hard, persevering work. You're moving up the career ladder, business is doing great. Now you want a better environment that's close to nature, a nicer way of living, so that your family can enjoy life more fully. But in an overcrowded and polluted Metro Manila, you probably would not imagine it's still possible to find such a place.

If you were to write a wish list for that dream place, you would want to:

- Live in a lovely, natural and unspoiled environment that includes century old trees;
- Wake up to the chirping of birds in the morning;
- See stars in the sky on a clear night outside your door, or from your balcony;
- Breathe clean and fresh air;
- Be surrounded by an open, well-maintained landscape;
- Enjoy cool temperatures amid elevated, gently rolling terrain;
- Feel secure and at peace without fences to separate you from the neighbors;
- Avail of leisure amenities like a clubhouse and ball courts, only a walk away.

Believe it or not, there is such a place! Cottonwoods, the first flagship brand of 360° Living, Brittany Corporation's new division, is one of Antipolo's best-kept secrets. An exclusive residential community on 42 hectares of prime land, Cottonwoods boasts all the features described above that most people can only fantasize about, yet it's just a short distance from Ortigas Center.

Cottonwoods, a full-blown community, is launching a new phase, consisting of a limited number of home and lot packages on six hectares.

Like all other developments of 360° Living, Cottonwoods is for upwardly mobile couples in their 30s and 40s with young children and comfortable disposable incomes. They want a community that meets their criteria for a great quality of life and the kind of living environment they want for their families. Adhering to Brittany's vision of residential communities that are guided by a theme, the homes at Cottonwoods are inspired by the architecture and looks of American homes, such as those typically found in the state of Maine.

The new phase of Cottonwoods offers different model homes, ranging up to 160 sq. m. in floor area which can be constructed on lots starting at 180 sq. m. up to 220 sq. m. Home and lot units are available from Php 3.3 million to Php 6 million.

The terrain of Cottonwoods dictates the wisdom of offering different home designs that are suitable for various topographical layouts, whether flat, sloped, uphill or downhill.

Most of the model homes for the new phase are distinguished by a porch incorporated into three-quarters of each facade, to preserve an unobstructed view of the natural beauty of Cottonwoods, allowing residents to stay connected with nature. Each homeowner enjoys a sense of his haven extending beyond his residence to the entire community and its green surroundings. The garages are tucked into the rear of the houses, with alleys to provide access for homeowners' vehicles. The facades become much more aesthetically pleasing with the garages out in back.

An added blessing of living at Cottonwoods is the climate advantage, because for some meteorological reason, the area has its own weather! Even when it gets really warm in the rest of Metro Manila, the temperatures up there stay cooler. And when it rains in other parts of the metropolis, the weather at Cottonwoods is just right.

Living at Cottonwoods is an affirmation of life well-lived. "You wake up in the morning hearing only the sounds of nature, and it feels great," says Cottonwoods resident Dave Langcake. You and your family deserve such a reward, a home at Cottonwoods by 360° Living.

360° Living homes provide space of one's own, from a dad's corner nook to a child's play area.

If this image softens you,
imagine what experiencing it can do.

Imagine a community where butterflies roam freely. A flower laden-porch, white picket fences, rolling hills, and tree-lined streets. A sanctuary of all things soothing and relaxing. Where time stops and everything around you move slowly so you could appreciate life and all things worth living.

Now stop imagining.
Call **850 2868 or 850 6986** for a property preview.
All it takes is just one trip.

Cottonwoods

360° LIVING
A DIVISION OF BRITTANY CORPORATION

VIA ORTIGAS EXTENSION: From Ortigas Ave., go straight until Ortigas Ext. Upon reaching the Circumferential Rd., turn left. Go straight up to a triangle landmark, then turn to Taktak Rd. Turn right at the Circumferential Rd. Go straight ahead until Cottonwoods Drive.

VIA MARCOS HIGHWAY: From Marcos Highway, turn right at the intersection (you'll find Masinag Market on your left). This is now Sumulong Highway. Turn left at the Circumferential Rd., go straight ahead until Cottonwoods Drive.

The first to build properties based on the best cities, landscapes and lifestyles in the world, property development maverick Brittany Corporation continues to build uniquely themed properties.

From its inception, Brittany Corporation has always taken a world view as the basis for each property's theme. This is carried not only in the architecture but across the entire property–including the amenities, the surrounding terrain and even the types of trees to be planted.

To date, four major properties are in full swing of development, with more in the pipeline. Each one offers a lifestyle unique from the other.

viss haven up in e hills

CROSSWINDS

Lush pine trees cover the gentle rolling hills. The bracing scent of fresh pine greets you every day. The calming quiet relaxes in the midst of the cool air. An alpine retreat? Almost. This is life at Crosswinds, Tagaytay, where Swiss living is at its finest.

At Crosswinds, you have Swiss homes surrounded by balconies on which you can enjoy the alpine-like air. Inside, a "great room", a wide open area, makes for an ideal venue for family gatherings.

Strategically located in the hills of Tagaytay for the continually blowing winds, Crosswinds offers a cool, tranquil environment. It's what life would be like in the Alps.

A rustic Tuscan countryside

VITA TOSCANA

Reminiscent of the Italian countryside, Vita Toscana is an ideal residence for taking a break from the hectic pace of everyday life.

The homes, inspired by classic Tuscan houses, make for the ideal place to sit back and relax all day long. Countryside Italian architecture makes for quaint homes with an almost pastoral charm.

A short distance from Metro Manila, right in Cavite, Vita Toscana features expansive landscapes abundant with flowers and lush greenery basking in the warm sun.

At Vita Toscana, you live in a place that allows for a lifestyle pace you'll like.

Inspired by San Francisco's poster row

LA POSADA

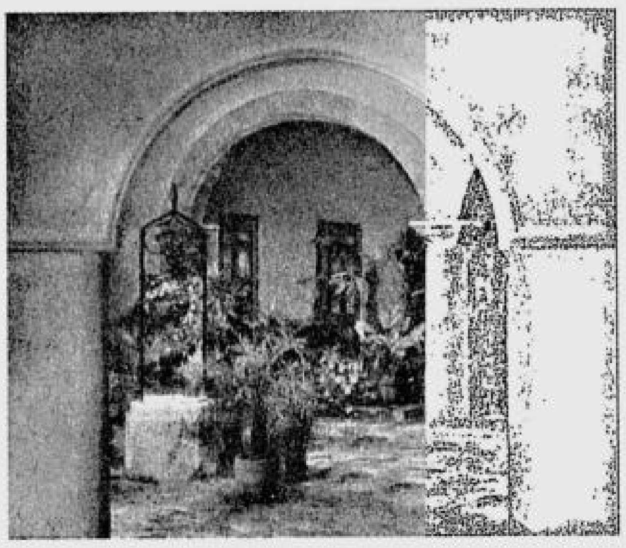
The streets of San Francisco come alive at La Posada. The architecture takes from the artistic Neo-Victorian influence–flat roof lines, corniced eaves, angled bay windows and Corinthian-columned porches.

Victorianne Row emulates San Francisco's famed "poster row" but is surrounded by open space. This is ideal for those who are looking for a great beginning to their lives. The individual homes, with even more space is perfect for empty-nesters with ample room for themselves.

At the entrance, restaurants, bars and cafes further emulate the San Francisco life wherein everything is close to home. And soon, a multi-purpose clubhouse will be available for gatherings.

Situated inside Brittany Bay, Sucat, La Posada is accessible via the South Luzon Expressway, C-5 and Bicutan. It's San Francisco life that's right nearby.

Courtyard livin[illegible]ban italy



COURTYARDS OF PORTOFINO

The warm sun kisses a landscape of Italian homes, cobblestone streets, and flowers in terra cotta pots. Inside the homes are courtyards graced with gardens, statues, benches and fountains. It's a pleasant place for taking a bit of fresh air even while inside your home.

This is Courtyards of Portofino. Unique in the country, Courtyards of Portofino features an open-air space in the homes. A markedly urban Italian architectural feature, the courtyard provides access to ground floor rooms. Numerous windows and balconies allow for an abundance of light as it is in the homes of Italy. And these courtyard homes surround bigger, grand courtyards making for a spacious community.

Located in Alabang, the Courtyards of Portofino is conveniently close to the commercial area, schools, and thoroughfares.

LIVE IN SOME OF THE WORLD'S BEST DESTINATIONS

Brittany Corporation shares their vision of life as inspired by some of the world's travel locations.

Four properties. Four distinct themes. Each one inspired by the best destinations the world over. These are concrete expressions of Brittany's pioneering efforts in creating and delivering innovative concepts in property development.

With Brittany Corporation, each and every property brings the world's finest architecture, communities, and lifestyles–what Brittany calls lifescapes–in places where you would like to live.

Brittany

CORPORATION

Bringing you the world's best lifescapes

If you share Brittany's world view, call 850 2868, 850 6986 or 850 3084. Or email us at mktg@brittany.com.ph. You can also visit our website to get an overview of Brittany properties at www.brittany.com.ph.

360° LIVING OF BRITTANY:

A SENSE OF HOME, A SANCTUARY

There are achievers in their 30s and 40s who are making their mark in their chosen fields, be it in corporate, professional or entrepreneurial life. They're upwardly mobile couples, with one or two young children. Accomplished as they are, they're headed for even greater things. They want the best quality of life possible for their families, meaning they want homes consistent with their comfortable means, their high standards and their refined tastes. They have expectations of what a home should be: a shelter for their children to grow up in with an unspoiled environment; a sanctuary where they can reenergize in peaceful comfort; a refuge for spending private time with their families; a possession enabling them to connect with nature and neighbors.

Brittany Corporation, the country's leader in developing themed and master-planned residential communities, launches a new corporate division, 360° Living, to partner with such achievers in attaining the quality of life they envision for their families. Specifically, 360° Living aims to help them build their own comfortable and distinctive homes in communities of their choice, guided by their expectations about a home.

Empathizing with the needs and wants of these achievers, 360° Living will develop exclusive, themed residential communities and homes. With these people in mind, meticulously designed enclaves are carefully built to help enrich their lives.

As a unique element of planning, the designs of all 360° Living communities and homes consciously revolve around families and their activities. The objective of planning is to maximize comfort and satisfaction for residents as they go about their daily lives.

The flagship brand of 360° Living is Cottonwoods in Antipolo City, with its American-inspired homes laid out on gently rolling, elevated terrain beneath an open sky. Other brands of Brittany's new division are under development at prime locations in Alabang, Laguna and Cavite.

Intelligent use of space. Characterized by intelligent space planning, residential designs by 360° Living demonstrate the relevance and value of the concept that "more can be done with less." The ingenious use of space gives the feeling that the homes are much bigger than their actual floor areas.

Shelter around activity. Each residence is designed to provide shelter around family activity. Thus, various areas like the family room or den are planned to promote the fulfillment of harmonious interaction among members of the family residing there.

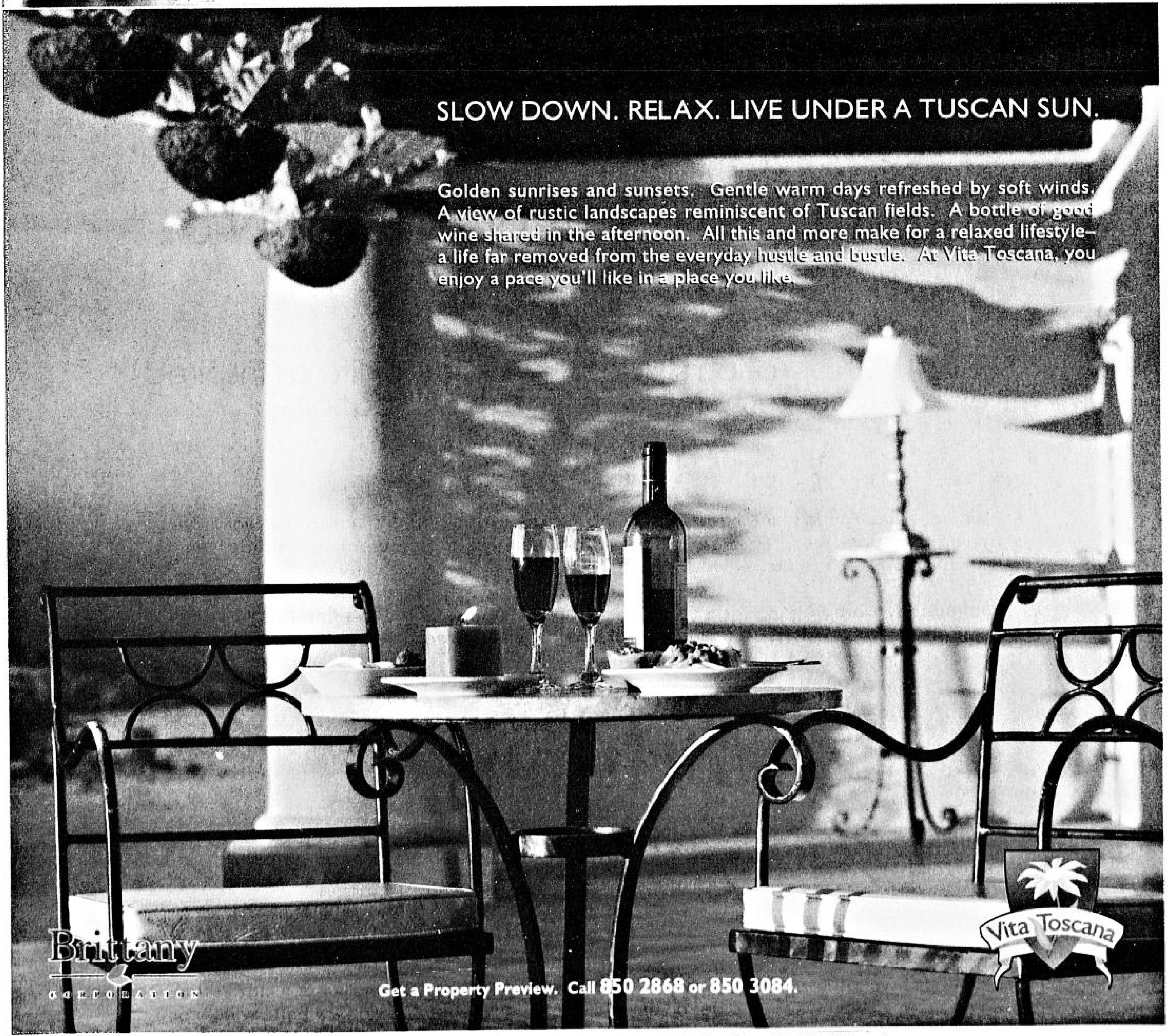
Multi-functionality. The designs of the houses allow various areas of each home to serve more than one function. Be it a cozy spot to entertain bosom friends, or a private space for reading or appreciating music or watching TV, or a common area in which parents and children can catch up on the day's doings.

Space of one's own. A 360° Living home creates individual spaces for every member of the family, whether a creative and quiet corner for mom, a mini-gym for dad, or a fantasy nook for the little girl of the house where she can give rein to her budding imagination.

Interior views. The interiors of the residences are enhanced by thoughtfully located windows that look out onto a pleasant landscape and charming neighborhood scenes, while allowing natural light indoors to emphasize the sense of space within.

Every family in a 360° Living home will be rewarded by the experience of a comfortable and happy way of life that affirms their sense of who they are and what they're achieving. Most of all, they will derive fulfillment, because they know they're getting the best from 360° Living.

360° LIVING
A DIVISION OF BRITTANY CORPORATION



Golden sunrises and sunsets. Gentle warm days refreshed by soft winds. A view of rustic landscapes reminiscent of Tuscan fields. A bottle of good wine shared in the afternoon. All this and more make for a relaxed lifestyle– a life far removed from the everyday hustle and bustle. At Vita Toscana, you enjoy a pace you'll like in a place you like.

Get a Property Preview. Call 850 2868 or 850 3084.

360° LIVING OF BRITTANY

A SENSE OF HOME, A SANCTUARY

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360° LIVING
A DIVISION OF BRITTANY CORPORATION

SLOW DOWN. RELAX. LIVE UNDER A TUSCAN SUN.

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